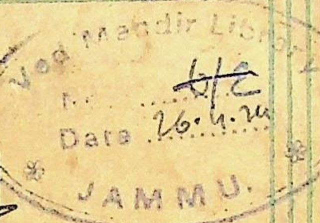




BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

BHAKTIYOGA

Aswini Kumar Datta

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

Rigveda, I-89-i

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BHAKTIYOGA

By

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Translated from Bengali

By

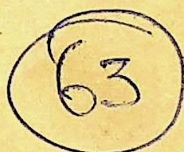
GUNADA CHARAN SEN

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

BHAKTIYOGA

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1959

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books. 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages : Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit :

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in

any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the Mahabharata, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari ; the second work is on a section of it ; the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the Mahabharata : " What is not in it, is nowhere. " After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul ; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic ; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some

who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival ; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD
NEW DELHI:
3rd October 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The little volume of which the following pages represent an English version has been read with such interest and often with so much profit by young and old alike in these Provinces, that I consider it a privilege to be able to present it to a wider section of the Indian Public. I am fully sensible of the numerous defects of the translation, and all that I can say in defence is that I have tried to do the best I could. I only wish the work had been undertaken by worthier hands.

I have avoided being too literal or scholastic for I never looked upon this rendering in the light of a literary performance, and I always remembered that the Author had prominently before his mind's eye the training of young men to a life of Devotion.

The Publisher or Editor's Preface to the original work has not been translated. For convenience's sake, I have divided the subjects discussed into chapters, though no chapters are mentioned in the original.

I hope the Sanskrit texts inserted at the foot of each page will be found useful by those who may be inclined to commit them to memory for the purpose of permanently retaining in mind the ideas they inculcate. Where no text is given as a footnote for an English extract appearing in half margin, it must be taken, unless otherwise mentioned, that the text is in Bengali and has not therefore been inserted at the foot. Some of the explanatory footnotes may seem superfluous from an Indian point of view, but in a work like this I could by no means forget those of our brethren

over the seas who take a keen and active interest in Indian thought and culture.

As to the translation of Sanskrit texts, I have freely used, sometimes without acknowledgement, though with adaptations, the standard works available, among which may be mentioned those of Cowell, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra and Mrs. Annie Besant. I take this opportunity of expressing my sense of indebtedness to all of them.

The translation has been thoroughly revised by the Author of the original, and also by my highly esteemed friend and teacher, Babu Jagadish Mukherjee, B.A., Head Master, Brojamohan Institution, Barisal. But for their assistance, the book would have not been what it now is. For its imperfections, however, I am to be held solely responsible.

BHOWANIPORE,
CALCUTTA,
Feb. 15, 1911.

GUNADA CHARAN SEN

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

The time seems highly opportune for a new edition, even though delayed, of this little volume. I have often heard it said that discipline and morality are passing through a grave and growing crisis in all spheres of our activities, private and public. Be that so or not, the question whether it is possible to introduce some sort of non-sectarian religious and moral training in our educational institutions, consistently with our political constitution, calls for an immediate and final decision.

This book, with several and similar others in India and elsewhere, may, I believe, help in the solution of this problem in its practical aspects.

I need hardly add how grateful I feel to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for undertaking this publication.

39, Townshend Road,
Bhawanipore,
Calcutta 25.
9th June 1959.

GUNADA CHARAN SEN

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INTRODUCTION

In these days[1] of religious controversies, sects are busy fighting about dogmas. We seem to take a peculiar delight in denouncing men who belong to a different sect. We have heard of preachers being specially enjoined to abuse those that follow an opposite cult, and the deeper the abuse the louder the cheers that greet the speech. We have thus lost sight of the essence of religion. We seem to forget that we have but a short lease of life here upon earth, and we blast our lives if we do nothing towards the fulfilment of the end we have come here to accomplish. Let us therefore strive after the true religion, which is the same in all sects. All the quarrel is about the externals, the non-essentials. We must go to the kernel and leave aside the shell. There may be as many sects in the world as there are sands upon the seashore; different people may, according to their varying tastes, adopt different doctrines, but who is there to gainsay that all humanity is moving towards the same goal? Surely that One Being is the goal of all, and surely the faculty that comprehends Him is the same in all. There is a beautiful Bengali song[2] which says:

"There is no difference in the object sought; God is one, and the Vedas are one. Virtue, Devotion, and Spiritual Communion are every-

1. These lectures were delivered in the year 1887-88. Tr.

2. By Babu Trailokyanath Sanyal of the New Dispensation Church of the Brahmo Samaj. Tr.

where made up of the same elements. Mercy and affection are always the same, human body is cast in the same mould, and it is the same red blood that runs in all veins. Doctrines may diverge as widely from one another, as do paths, but the goal to be reached is always the same. Let all advance towards that goal, be it by steamer or by train."

This is the essence of all truths. Hold fast to this principle, and let us not wrangle among ourselves. Every one knows those very well-known lines of the *Mahimnastotra*[3] which say:

"Vaidic, Sankhya, Yoga, Pashupati, Vaishnava—of these different cults some say this is the best creed, some say that. But as the ultimate destination of all rivers, be their course straight or crooked, is the great ocean, so all men, whatever path they may pursue owing to diversity of tastes, are bound for Thee."[4]

---

3. This is the seventh Sloka in the *Mahimnastotra*:

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति
प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

4. Vaidic—The doctrines inculcated by the three Vedas viz: *Rik, Yajus, and Sama*. The sacrifices described in the Vedas are perhaps alluded to.

Sankhya—One of the six Schools of Hindu Philosophy, which preaches the absolute duality of existence. Here perhaps it stands for तत्त्वज्ञान or the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality.

Yoga—Another of the six Schools, the Philosophical System of Patanjali. Here probably stands for Meditation or ध्यान योग by which the individual can be merged in the Universal.

Pashupati—A Philosophical doctrine which recognizes Pashupati (the Lord of Beings) or God, as the Efficient Cause of the

Those that leave the corn and waste time in quarrelling about the chaff, are they not fools ? For, truly did the Bengali poet say :

> " If you can triumph over the miseries of this life by worshipping even a paddy-husking machine, care not, friend, what others say. Go your way, and you will enjoy the sweets of love.[5]

Call Him a flail, if you choose ; all that is wanted is a pure and devoted heart, and darkness will then surely disappear and the path will lie clear and straight before you. Seek the light :

> " Wrangling does not dispel darkness, nor does brute force. Gently doth all darkness vanish, if you bring up before it a ray of light."[6]

Those that have filled their souls with light, who has ever seen them fight ? They look upon all with an equal eye. To him that hath climbed to the top of a hill, the trees upon the plains below seem all of an equal height, and fields of the same level. Babu Protap Chandra Mozoomdar,[7] the great missionary of the New Dispensation Church, once called upon the veteran leader of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, Maharshi

---

universe, and considers all created beings as essentially different from Him. Probably it stands here for the doctrine inculcated in the *Tantras*.

Vaishnava—Another Philosophical doctrine followed by Vaishnavas also called *Bhagavatas*, the chief modern exponent of it being Ramanuja. The *Vaishnavas* lay particular stress upon *bhakti*. Tr.

5. From a Bengali poem by Babu Trailokyanath Sanyal. Tr.

6. From a poem entitled Mangala Geeti by Rabindra Nath Tagore, who is regarded by many as Bengal's greatest poet. Tr.

7. Died 27th May, 1905, Tr.

Debendra Nath Tagore,[8] and found a copy of a well-known Christian work lying on the Maharshi's desk. Babu Protap Chandra knew that the Maharshi had a dislike towards Christianity, and he was therefore surprised to find the book there. He asked the Maharshi : " Why should this book be here upon your table ? " To this the great sage replied : " So long as I was walking upon the plains below, I could only see the ridges that marked one field off from another, but now that I have got up a little high, the entire country stretches forth beneath me like one vast plain without any ridges between, and owned by one master." Sectarian differences had lost themselves in the breadth of heart he had attained on reaching this high platform of spiritual life. Why, have we not seen how Paramahamsa Ramakrishna[9] of the Hindu sect lived in terms of the closest intimacy with Keshub Chandra Sen of the Brahmo Samaj ? The true lover of God respects neither caste nor creed, and his arms are

8. Died 19th January, 1905. The Brahmo Samaj founded early in the 19th century by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, perhaps the greatest name in modern Bengal, has since been split up into three *Samajs* or societies, the *Adi* or 'original' of which the venerable Maharshi Debendranath was the leader till his death, the *Bharatavarsh* meaning 'Indian,' called also the New Dispensation Church, which was led by the great Keshub Chandra Sen whose follower, life-companion and biographer Babu Protap Chandra Mozoomdar was, and the *Sadharan* or 'universal' which recognizes Pundit Shiva Nath Shastri as one of its leaders. The Brahmo Samaj has dissociated itself from the great body of the orthodox Hindu society as it is based upon a denunciation of caste, idol-worship, and their attendant practices. Tr.

9. (1836-1886) The Sage of Dakshineswara, a village a few miles north of Calcutta, where he began as a priest in the goddess Kali's temple, but ended life as a devotee of the highest order, revered by his disciples as an incarnation of God, the most prominent of them being the late Swami Vivekananda, the great Hindu preacher. Tr.

equally open to all. Look closely and you will find that all are in search of the same great Thing, in one shape or another. I once asked Paramahamsa Ramakrishna, 'What is the difference between the Hindu and the Brahmo religion?' "Here in this temple," said he, "I hear everyday a musical concert in which there is always one man who will constantly blow the same note from a horn-pipe while there is another who will bring out a hundred sweet strains from a second horn-pipe, and another giving out some well-known strain from a similar instrument. What is the difference between these? Imagine a large tank with a flight of steps on each of its four banks, and a man on each of the flights, speaking each a different tongue. You find one of these men drawing water from the tank along one of the stairways, and you go and ask him, 'What is it you are taking?' '*Jal*,'[10] says he. You find another man doing the same in another staircase, and you ask him the same question and he says, 'It is *pani*.'[11] A similar question to the third, and the reply is 'water.' You accost the fourth man, and he tells you 'It is *aqua*.' You see it is the same substance 'water' which is called by different names by men speaking different tongues. So it is the same Divine Being who has been given different names in different systems of worship according to the varied tastes and habits of men." Now, then, if the essence of all religion is one and the same, of what avail is all this wrangling among sects? Let us therefore set ourselves about the attainment of that great end of human life, the true essence of all religion —Devotion to God—*bhakti*.

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10. The Bengali equivalent for water. Sanskrit. जलम्. Tr.
11. The Hindi equivalent for water. Tr.

Chapter I

WHAT IS DEVOTION?

Narada says in his *Bhaktisutra:*[1]

> "It is a feeling of the deepest love towards some one."

In *Sandilyasutra;*[2]

> "It is supreme attachment to God."

This is spontaneous, motiveless or primary devotion.[3] The *Bhaktirasamritasindhu* says:

> "Raga (राग:) is the spontaneous outpour of the heart's love towards the object of its desire. That loving devotion is रागात्मिका भक्ति or spontaneous devotion."[4]

"It is the nature of the heart", says the Bengali song, "to yearn after Thee as it is the nature of the river to flow towards the ocean and of flowers to emit fragrance." This is true *bhakti* which springs from no effort, and is the spontaneous longing of the soul for God. It has no motive, the heart seeks nothing but the Beloved, prays for no temporal blessings, there is not even the prayer for salvation. All that the heart desires is His dear Self alone. Says Sri Krishna:

> "He that has given up his soul unto Me, has no desire even for the majesty of a Brahma or

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1. सा कस्मै परमप्रेमरूपा. Second aphorism Tr.
2. सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे. Ch. I, aphorism 2. Tr.
3. रागात्मिका, अहैतुकी or मुख्या भक्ति. Tr.
4. इष्टे स्वारसिकी रागः परमाविष्टता भवेत् ।
   तन्मयी या भवेद्भक्तिः सात्र रागात्मिकोदिता ॥

of Indra, the king of the gods, not to speak of the sovereignty of all this world or of the regions below—not even the consummation of *yoga* or exemption from re-birth. He desires nothing but Myself."[1]

Ramaprasada,[6] the prince of devotees, has truly said: "Devotion sitteth as the queen, salvation is but her maid of honour."

"The goddess of salvation prostrates herself at the feet of one whose soul has been entranced with the deep joy of devotion to God."[7]

The true devotee cares not for salvation, salvation comes of itself to him. What we call gratitude has no place in a spirit like this. 'God has given me so many things to enjoy, I should therefore love him' —there is no room for such a sentiment. Gratitude premises a solicitude for the things received, and devotion of the type we are dealing with must betray not the slightest trace of a desire for anything but God himself. Devotion, which has for its motive power a past or a future benefit, can never be motiveless. There is no 'whereas' or 'therefore' in it. As the Bengali song says: 'I love because I love; my nature is I know and love none but Thyself.'[8] This

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5. न पारमेष्ठ्य न महेन्द्रधिष्ण्यं न सार्वभौम न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धिरपुनर्भवं वा मय्यर्पितात्मेच्छति मद्विनान्यत् ॥
Ch. 14, Skandha XI, *Srimadbhagavata*. Tr.

6. Flourished in Bengal 1723-1775. His devotional songs remain to this day the most popular of their kind in our literature. Tr.

7. यदि भवति मुकुन्दे भक्तिरानन्दसान्द्रा ।
विलुठति चरणाब्जे मोक्षसाम्राज्यलक्ष्मीः ॥

8. This is a strain from a Bengali song the authorship of which is attributed to the well-known Sridhar Kathak—See বাঙ্গালীর গান p. 284, Bangabashi Press, Calcutta. Tr.

is the true essence of motiveless devotion. This, indeed, is the acme of devotion.

There is a lower type of devotion which hardly deserves the name. Yet, it is a rung in the ladder, and helps us to rise to the height of true devotion. This is a very difficult task indeed, but no one need despair. If you begin at the lowest rung, culture and constant application will steadily lead you to the top.

According to higher and lower capacities of men, *bhakti* has been divided into the following classes:

(1) Spontaneous—Motiveless—Primary.[9]

(2) Following the law—Founded on a motive—Secondary.[10]

Men of lower capacities, by earnestly practising the inferior type of devotion, are eventually blessed with the highest form of it. As in the *Bhaktirasamritasindhu:*[11]

> "So long as one does not get into a liking for Him, one has to practise the inferior type of *bhakti* viz. वैधी भक्ति or devotion which is derived from a study of the scriptures and a discussion favourable to the cause of *bhakti.*"

Once you imbibe a liking for Him, the liking soon intensifies into love, and this again into रागात्मिका भक्ति—the highest form of devotion whose soul is love. A steady and attentive application to the sacred books as well as discourses leading to a proof of the divine attributes, create an inclination towards God,

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9. रागात्मिका अहैतुकी मुख्या।
10. वैधी हैतुकी गौणी
11. वैधभक्त्यधिकारी तु भावाविर्भावनावधि।
तत्र शास्त्रं तथा तर्कमनुकूलमपेक्षते ।।

and this results in strong attachment. The divine theme has a charm of its own which draws out the heart's love. Many a hard-hearted atheist has been seen to give way to the influence of the divine name and even to go mad in love of God.

Now, this lower form of *bhakti* springs from motive, as I was telling you, and is therefore known as हैतुकी भक्ति, which means devotion founded on some motive. God has supplied me with so many comforts and will give me more, how often He has saved me from troubles and difficulties, who is so kind as He?—Love out of such considerations, which is consequent on some benefit derived or expectant of some good to come, which craves for wealth or honour or such other earthly good, is surely an inferior type of devotion which is only to be used as a stepping-stone to a higher standard. From the very first, this motiveless devotion manifested itself in the great boy-devotee Prahlada.[12] Day and night he took the name of Sri Krishna, but knew not why. Dhruva,[13] however, began his devotions in the hope

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12. Son of Hiranya Kashipu king of the *Daityas* (Demons), who developed an extraordinary love of the god Hari (Vishnu), though his father was a bitter enemy of that god by whom he was at length killed. Prahlada's father, while alive, failed in all attempts to dissuade his son from his *bhakti* towards Hari. The story is to be found in *Srimadbhagavata*, Skandha VII. Tr.

13. Son of king Uttanapada, who had two wives. Dhruva the son of the less favoured wife, while a little boy, was sitting on the throne in his father's lap one day, when the more favoured queen appeared and chided Dhruva for his audacity and got him to come down, placing her own son on the throne in Dhruva's stead. The little Druva felt mortified, went weeping to his mother, and enquired of her how a man could come by a throne. On being told that it could be through Hari's grace alone, the boy left for the forests in quest of that god. See *Srimadbhagavata*, Skandha VIII, Chapter 8-12. Tr.

of obtaining a kingdom. God grants to a prayerful spirit whatever is asked for—that was the idea with which Dhruva started. When at length after years of deep meditation, the Lord appeared before him and asked him to solicit a boon, His love had taken such a firm hold of his heart, that he was taken by surprise, and on being reminded why he had begun his devotions, what the child devotee said was this:

> "True, my Lord, I began with a desire for kingly position, but now that I have got Thee that art unrevealed even unto the best of devotees, I seek no boon. I am blessed, O my Lord, I have lighted upon a most precious jewel, while looking for mere tinsel."[14]

What a consummation! हैतुकी भक्ति or devotion having some end in view, has vanished for ever. Here is another *bhakta* who, when the Divine Mother appeared before him and asked him what boon he wanted, said:

> "What other boon shall I seek, O my mother, when I have seen the rare sight of those thy lotus feet which even the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva worship and can yet rarely see? Verily, all my desires are fulfilled."[15]

---

14. स्थानाभिलाषी तपसि स्थितोऽहं
त्वं प्राप्तवान् देव मुनीन्द्रगुह्यम् ।
काचं विचिन्वन्नाप दिव्यरत्नं
स्वामिन् कृतार्थोऽस्मि वरं न याचे ।।
—भक्तिसुधोदयम्

15. मातः किं वरमपरं याचे सर्वं सम्पादितमिति सत्यम् ।
यत्त्वच्चरणाम्बुजमतिगुह्यं दृष्टं विधिहरमुरहरजुष्टम् ।।
—सर्वानन्दतरङ्गिणी

I once asked Paramahamsa Kamaraja Swami of Hardwar, "What is it you ask from God?" "What have I to pray for," said he, "but that my soul may ever cling to Him?" Truly, what should the devotee want when he has got the Lord of his heart? "The bee, if honey is hers, what cares she for water?" Man worships God for earthly ends only so long as he remains in the dark. But when the light of divine love flashes upon him, and when he has tasted of the sweets of that love, what else can he desire but Him alone? Should any one ask him then why he loves God, his only reply is, "I love, because I love." हैतुकी भक्ति or devotion originating from a motive may thus develop into अहैतुकी or motiveless devotion, and is only the means to that end.

गौणी or हैतुकी भक्ति i.e. secondary devotion or devotion with a motive is of the three following grades according to one mode of classification:

सात्विकी, i.e. Pure or Enlightened, राजसी i.e. Impassioned or Egotistic, and तामसी i.e. Darkened or Deluded. From the तामसी or the lowest form, you can attain to the राजसी and from there again you can rise up gradually to the attainment of the सात्विकी, and this will ultimately lead you to the purest form of devotion, viz. मुख्या or अहैतुकी i.e. Primary or motiveless devotion. Says Lord Sri Krishna:

> "O Arjuna, even a miscreant must be regarded as a sage if he will devote himself single-mindedly to Me, for he has true wisdom. He who will thus worship Me, soon becomes true-hearted and attains to everlasting bliss. Know

this for certain, O son of Kunti, my *Bhakta* shall never perish."[16]

I will now illustrate the above three classes of गौणी भक्ति or secondary devotion :—Thieves and dacoits worship God praying for the fulfilment of their nefarious designs. Bands of dacoits were formerly known to worship the goddess Kâli before they went out on their marauding expeditions. Many people are even now seen to worship that goddess with a view to gaining false law-suits. These are तामस भक्त or *bhaktas* blinded by delusion. Those that worship God for some earthly end, for worldly prosperity or for putting down an enemy that has done them an evil turn, are known as राजस or *passionate bhaktas*. And those that do not at all care for mundane pleasures, but pray to God for Heavenly bliss alone, are known as सात्विकी or *passionless and enlightened bhaktas*. All these three sorts of *bhakti* have an ulterior motive, while मुख्या भक्ति or primary devotion has none. There is no desire even for heavenly bliss in मुख्या or primary *bhakti*.

According to a second principle of classification, there are again three classes of गौणी or secondary devotees : आर्त्त or distressed, जिज्ञासु or inquiring, अर्थार्थी or mendicant.

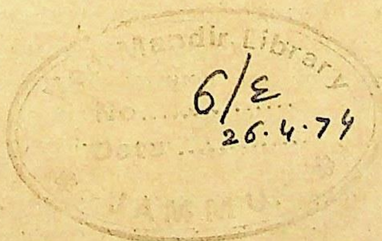
An आर्त्त or distressed *bhakta* is one that implores the mercy of Heaven to deliver him out of some trouble,—as a passenger would when a boat is

16. अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

Srimadbhagavadgita Chapter IX, Slokas 30, 31. Tr.

caught in a storm in the midst of a river. A जिज्ञासु or inquiring *bhakta* is one that has no love of God to start with, but who is anxious to know the truth about God and His doings, and studies them with that end in view. An अर्थार्थी or mendicant *bhakta* is one who asks of God a definite boon—for example, a son, fame, wealth, and so on.

All the above belong to a very inferior type of devotees. But they may all attain to the higher standard, the मुख्या *bhakti* i. e. devotion for its own sake, after constant practice for some time on the lower lines. Those आर्त्त or distressed *bhaktas* for example who have learnt to invoke divine help in times of trouble, if they cherish this spirit, will surely continue to take His name even after the troubles are over, and thus gradually raise themselves to the lofty sphere of मुख्या or primary *bhakti.* A जिज्ञासु or inquiring *bhakta*, who will study God in books and in nature, will gradually become enamoured of Him and गौणी or secondary *bhakti* will thus be replaced in his heart by मुख्या or primary *bhakti.* Dhruva affords the best illustration of how an अर्थार्थी or mendicant *bhakta* can come to attain मुख्या or primary *bhakti.*



Chapter II

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF BHAKTI

Sri Krishna in the Eleventh Skandha of the *Srimadbhagavata* says:

> "He who has not yet learnt to look with indifference upon all earthly objects, and is not very much attached to them either, who has just imbibed a liking for Divine topics, is a fit person for the practice of *bhakti*."[1]

Devotion is not possible so long as you are entirely in the darkness of doubt, and are not in the least inclined towards God. To be a *bhakta*, you must occasionally, if not always, be inclined God-ward.

Devotion has absolutely nothing to do with age, caste, or rank. It is altogether erroneous to suppose that one should not practise devotion till he is of mature age. Childhood is, on the contrary, the fittest time to begin to cultivate devotion. Paramahamsa Ramakrishna used to say, "Sow the seeds of devotion while the heart is tender as clay, and before it has hardened by contact with the world." A friend of mine once said: "To begin to worship God in old age is like offering Him the leavings of Satan's repast." Old people are often heard to observe that childhood is the time to acquire knowledge, youth to gain wealth, and old age to practise devotion. But that surely is not the Divine will. Learning and wealth

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1. यदृच्छया मत्कथादौ जातश्रद्धस्तु यः पुमान् ।
न निर्विण्णो नातिसक्तो भक्तियोगोऽस्य सिद्धिदः ॥

Ch. XX, Sloka 8.

have both to be acquired in company with God. What are learning and riches worth, devoid of religion? In an irreligious soul, they foster nothing but wickedness, and there hardly remains anything for old age save repentance, as the following verses very well illustrate :

> "O Durga, mother of god Ganesha, I could not say prayers to Thee in my childhood as I then lacked the power of speech. In boyhood and youth, first acquisition of knowledge and then wordly concerns engrossed my mind. So have I never been able to practise devotion. I am now terrified by the constant tinkling of the bells round the neck of the buffalo. Whom shall I go to, helpless as I am ?"[2]

Such indeed is the fate of him who has not cared for religion in early life, and who therefore trembles at the approach of death in old age. Contrast with this the words of one that has led a godly life :

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2. शिशौ नासीद्वाक्यं जननि तव मन्त्रं प्रजपितुं
किशोरे विद्यायां विषमविषये तिष्ठति मनः।
इदानीं भीतोऽहं महिषगलघण्टाघनरवा-
न्निरालम्बो लम्बोदरजननि कं यामि शरणम् ॥

Lambodarajananistava, Sloka I.

Durga is the most prominent among the deities worshipped in Bengal, and is represented in a fighting attitude standing upon a lion with her ten arms outstretched and carrying various weapons, and with Kartika and Ganesha, her two sons, and Lakshmi and Saraswati her daughters, by her side. Ganesha is the god who blesses all human undertakings, and is represented with a big belly and an elephant's trunk.

The Hindu Mythology represents Yama, the god of death, as riding on a buffalo with a mace in hand, in which form he appears before a departing soul for the purpose of transporting it to the next world. Buffaloes generally have small bells tied to their necks to warn people of their approach. Tr.

"Not in the least does my soul tremble at thy frowns, O Death."[3]

Be always prepared to meet death. For, death comes to young and old alike :

"Be pious in early age, for life is uncertain. Who knows whom death will not overtake today ?"[4]

Says Prahlada :

"The sensible will cultivate devotion and piety in early age, for human life is a rare gift of God, more so the life of one that has achieved the end of his birth."[5]

Nearly all of those that have been adored as sages and saints have developed love of God in an early age. One who has not acquired *bhakti* in early years, is visited with an old age full of regrets. Let young men, therefore, practise devotion lest they repent when it is too late.

I have already said that no distinctions of caste or colour find a place in the sphere of *bhakti*. Says Sandilya :

"Even the despised castes have a right to it."[6]

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3. This is from a Bengali poem in *Sadbhavasataka* by Pandit Krishna Chandra Mozoomdar. Tr.

4. युवैव धर्मशीलः स्यात् अनित्यं खलु जीवितम्
को हि जानाति कस्याद्य मृत्युकालो भविष्यति ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CLXXV, Sloka 16.

5. कौमार आचरेत् प्राज्ञो धर्मान् भागवतानिह ।
दुर्लभं मानुषं जन्म तदप्यध्रुवमर्थदम् ॥
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha VII, Ch. VI, Sloka 1.

6. आनिन्द्ययोन्यधिक्रियते ।
Sandilyasutra, Ch. II, Sutra 78.

The devotions of a *Chandala*, if genuine, will move Him quite as much as those of one of a superior caste. God looks upon all with an equal eye. Cannot a *Chandala* love you, and how long can you resist the influence of his love, if he loves you sincerely? Guhaka[7] was a *Chandala*. He addressed Ramachandra[8] in the most familiar terms. This excited Lakshmana's[9] ire, and he once fell upon Guhaka and was about to kill him outright, when Rama intervened and said:

> "Listen to me, my brother. Whom are you going to kill? Do not blame this dear friend of mine. It is through deep love that he uses 'thou' and 'thee' to me, and this makes me love him very dearly indeed. With love the *Chandala* makes me his own, while without it even the Brahmin is none to me; nectar is not acceptable to me if it comes from the hand of one that has no love for me; while even poison is quite welcome, if given by one that loves me."[10]

Shabari[11] was a *Chandala* girl, and we all know how

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7. A prince of the *Chandalas*, i.e. an inferior class of Hindus, whose hospitality Sri Ramachandra accepted in the beginning of his fourteen years' exile in the forests, and who was regarded as a valued friend by Sri Ramachandra. See *Ramayana*, Ayodhyakanda, Ch. L. Tr.

8. The hero of the *Ramayana*, the great Sanskrit epic by Valmiki. He was the ideal of a Hindu king, and was the incarnation of the god Vishnu. Tr.

9. Sri Ramachandra's brother. Tr.

10. A popular Bengali song by Dasarathi Roy better known as Dashu Roy, a celebrated writer of Bengali songs who flourished 1804-1857. Tr.

11. The story of Shabari is to be found in the *Ramayana*, Aranyakanda, Ch. LXXIV. No orthodox Hindu will partake of food already tasted by another, especially one of an inferior caste, younger age, or of a lower degree of relationship. Tr.

Ramachandra ate of the fruits previously tasted by her. Love purifies all:

> "These eight kinds of *bhakti*, even if they exist in a *mlecchha*,[12] turn him into a prince of Brahmins, a sage, an ascetic, a truly wise man."[13]

Nor does devotion discriminate between a rich man and a poor. Is not He pre-eminently the friend of the poor? Easier it is for the poor to become virtuous, for the ways of the rich are beset with temptations. Truly did Jesus say: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

There is a beautiful anecdote in our Shastras. When Kali (the Evil One) presented himself to Raja Parikshit,[14] the Raja said to him, "There is no place for thee in my kingdom. You must leave it at once." Kali, perplexed at this, said: "O Lord of all, be pleased to find some room for me in thy kingdom." The king then assigned these places to Kali : (i) the gaming table, (ii) the place where people drink, (iii) where there is dalliance with women, (iv) where animals are killed. Kali thought it would be difficult for him to reside at so many places at the same time. He therefore asked for one place where all these might be found together. The Raja thereupon presented to Kali a ball of gold, for herein might be

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12. A term meaning a "non-Hindu," generally believed to be a term of contempt. Tr.

13. भक्तिरष्टविधा ह्येषा यस्मिन् म्लेच्छेऽपि वर्त्तते ।
स विप्रेन्द्रो मुनिः श्रीमान् स यतिः स च पण्डितः ॥

Garudapurana, Part 1, Ch. CCXXXI, Slokas 9 and 10. The eight kinds of *bhakti* are described in the preceding Slokas. Tr.

14. Son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna, one of the five Pandava brothers. Tr.

found all the above four and one more element besides, viz. enmity.[15] Riches indeed are the root of all evil. Among the wealthy, few have been known for sincere devotion to God. Pride of wealth has no place in heaven. It is a humble spirit and not pompous ceremonials that will help a man in the way to piety. That Friend of the friendless will come to him alone, who, clad in rags, sends up to Him the longings of his heart. Mere sacrificial ceremonies will not do. The Bengali song says:

> "Only to the love of thy *bhakta* art thou a bond-slave. Ceremonies without devotion will not avail towards the attainment of a true knowledge of Thee. Who can buy Thee with gold?"[16]

Vidura's grains[17] are more welcome to Him than the most sumptuous feast that can be offered by the greatest of earthly kings.

Devotion is quite possible without any learning, though learning is a great help in its way. Paramahamsa Ramakrishna is one of the noblest examples in point. What was his learning, and yet who amongst us was so wise as he? We have seen the most learned

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15. अभ्यर्थितस्तदा तस्मै स्थानानि कलये ददौ ।
द्यूतं पानं स्त्रियः सूना यत्राधर्मश्चतुर्विधः ॥
पुनश्च याचमानाय जातरूपमदात् प्रभुः ।
ततोऽनृतं मदं कामं रजो वैरञ्च पञ्चमम् ॥

Srimadbhagavata, Skandha I, Ch. XVII, Slokas 38 and 39.

16. *Brahmasangita* or the Hymn-book of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, 8th edition, p. 457. Tr.

17. The story goes how Sri Krishna who is believed to be an incarnation of God, one day came to the house of Vidura who had a saintly character but was in extreme poverty, and how when the god asked for something to eat, Vidura had nothing better to give him than a few small particles of rice which Sri Krishna accepted and ate with the greatest pleasure. Tr.

of men gathering wisdom at his feet. Devotion had opened out to him the great fountain-head of all wisdom. It is the book of Nature that devotees like him study, and they study it in a way that few of those that are learned in the ways of the world, ever do. God is our father, and who ever requires the study of science to address his father? The unlettered son pours out the sincerest love of his heart towards the Divine Mother, and She gradually unfolds to his wondering gaze the deep and subtle truths of nature. That source of all wisdom will surely reveal Her nature to Her votary. There is a very beautiful sloka by a Vaishnava :

"What was there in the conduct of the hunter ? And what the age of Dhruva ? What the learning of the elephant ? What were the charms of the hump-backed woman ? What the wealth of the Brahmin Sudama ? What the birth of Vidura and the valour of Ugrasena, the king of the Yadavas ? And yet did Madhava reveal Himself to them. He is moved by prayer alone, not by merits or talents."[18]

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18. व्याधस्याचरणं ध्रुवस्य च वयो विद्या गजेन्द्रस्य का
कुब्जायाः किमु नाम रूपमधिकं किन्तत् सुदाम्नो धनम् ।
वंशः को विदुरस्य यादवपतेरुग्रस्य किं पौरुषम्
भक्त्या तुष्यति केवलं न च गुणैर्भक्तिप्रियो माधवः ॥

The authorship of this sloka cannot be traced. The allusions are explained below :

THE HUNTER—This is perhaps a reference to a character called *Dharmabyadha*, who lived by hunting and selling raw meat. Yet did he attain *bhakti* in God by a wholehearted devotion to his aged parents. *Mahabharata*, Vanaparva, Chs. CCVI-XV. There is another hunter also, whose story is told in the *Shivapurana*.

DHRUVA—See Foot-note, p. 21, ante.

ELEPHANT—This animal was caught by his proboscis by an alligator when drinking water in a stream, and was rescued

Sincere faith, and not mere asceticism, is the way. One day, the sage Narada[19] was on a visit to the god Vishnu. He met on the way an ascetic who had betaken himself to the severest penances, and whose body lay half buried in an ant-hill. The ascetic called out to Narada, " O, my Lord, for my sake ask the god Vishnu how longer still shall I have to continue my penances for the attainment of bliss ?" The sage promised so to do, and went a few paces on his way, when he found the simple Santirama smoking his *ganja*.[20] Santirama on seeing Narada enquired where he was going, and on being told it was to Vishnu's place, Santirama jubilantly shouted out, " Well, ask your god if my *ganja* will come out right

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by invoking the god Vishnu who appeared in person. *Srimadbhagavata*, Skandha VIII, Chs. II-IV.

HUMP-BACKED WOMAN—This was a deformed woman of Mathura, the capital of King Kamsa, who was healed by Sri Krishna on his first entrance into the town, as a reward for her gratuitous offer of sandal-paste and other scents. *Srimadbhagavata*, Skandha X, Ch. XLII.

SUDAMA—Ch. XLI, Skandha X of the *Srimadbhagavata* speaks of a gardener of this name to whose house Sri Krishna repaired as a guest, being pleased with the garlands he offered him and the sincere regard he displayed for him, on the eve of his entry into the city of Mathura referred to above. But the story of the poor Brahmin Sudama, related in Ch. LXXX of the said Skandha, would seem to suit the context better.

VIDURA—Lived a life of the highest piety and devotion to Sri Krishna. The story of his birth is to be found in Ch. CVI of the Adiparva, *Mahabharata*.

UGRASENA—The King of Mathura and head of the Yadava family, proved too weak for his son Kamsa who deposed him. Sri Krishna killed Kamsa the son, and restored the father to the throne which the latter enjoyed for sometime as the titular King. *Harivamsa*, Vishnuparva, Ch. XXXII.

19. Narada was a sage of the highest piety, who often acted as the messenger of the gods and is represented with a lyre in hand, always singing hymns. Tr.

20. *Ganja* is an Indian drug (hemp) which is a very favourite smoke with the *Yogis* or ascetics, who consider it as of great assistance in concentrating the mind for devotional purposes. Tr.

in the abode of the gods without prayer, worship or penances." Narada agreed to do this also, and on reaching the god's presence, he put both the questions to him. Directly Santirama's name was mentioned to the god, he was visibly moved, and exclaimed with emotion, " O my Narada, where is there on earth such a true votary of mine as Santirama ? But who is the other man you speak of ? " Narada on his way back related everything to Santirama, who leapt with joy, as he gave out the strain :

> " Rejoice, O Santirama, for your *ganja* has secured a place in the abode of the blessed."

This is indeed the way in which sincere faith will achieve its end. For neither caste, nor rank, nor riches, nor learning is necessary for devotion. Says Narada in his *Bhaktisutra*[21] :

> " The men of faith respect not caste, learning, beauty, birth, riches or rituals."

As in His eyes all are equal, Brahmins and *Chandalas*, so is the case with His votaries also.

There are not a few who are often heard to say, " How can we be *bhaktas* when we have to be so much immersed in earthly concerns ? " But there are many instances of *bhaktas* among men of the world. Ramananda Roy[22] was the king of Orissa's chief financial minister. Upon his head rested the burden of a great kingdom, and yet Gouranga[23] loved

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21. नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादिभेदः। Sutra 72.

22. This and the following are the names of some of Chaitanya's foremost disciples. See *Sri Chaitanyacharitamrita*. Tr.

23. Another name of Sri Chaitanya of Navadwipa, who is believed to be an incarnation of God by the Vaishnavas in Bengal and several other Provinces. His character and doings are related

and regarded him as a high-class devotee. Even Nityananda had taken to a married life. Mukunda one day took Gadadhara with him to see Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Gadadhara found Pundarika lolling upon a bed white as snow with a mattress more than half a cubit high. The room was redolent of the fragrance of scents, and there were not wanting in it other elements of luxury. Gadadhara was a little put out at this sight, as he expected to find quite a different state of things, Pundarika being known as one of the greatest devotees of the day. Mukunda was quick to perceive this, and he began singing the name of God. This overpowered the great devotee, and Pundarika fell into a trance, and dropped on the floor. Gadadhara stood wondering, and afterwards begged Pundarika's pardon, and as an atonement for the injustice done, Gadadhara installed Pundarika as his spiritual guide.

Why should not a worldly man be able to devote himself to God ? Is not this world a creation of His ? The Devil surely does not rule it. It is God who has given us our parents and other dear relations. How then is it that in doing our duties to them, we must snap the ties that bind us to Him ?

We can keep from temptation if we consecrate our heart and soul to the service of God. Be a man as worldly as ever, he can keep clear of all sins and temptations, if only he has his soul full of God's love :

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in a number of books which have been justly regarded as valuable contributions to our literature, the most authoritative of them being the *Sri Chaitanyacharitamrita* by Krishnadas Goswami. *Gouranga* literally means 'having a fair complexion.' Chaitanya was so called on account of his pre-possessing appearance. See the last Chapter of this book. Tr.

"A dancing girl, while exhibiting her performances, has her attention riveted on the water-pot she bears on her head, though all the time she is dancing to various tunes. So does a truly pious man attend to all his business concerns, but has his mind's eye ever fixed upon the blissful feet of the Lord."[24]

When Shukadeva[25] went to king Janaka[26] to study *yoga*, the question troubled his soul, 'How could such a wordly man be devoted to God ?' Janaka divined his thoughts, and gave him a cup filled to the brim with oil, and said, "Go about this city of mine, with this vessel in hand. But, mind, you must not spill a drop of the oil in it." Shuka did so, and returned to Janaka with the vessel. Janaka asked him what he saw, and he gave a detailed account of all that he had seen. "But," asked Janaka, "how is it, my boy, that not a drop of the oil has fallen out of the cup, while you were walking about with it, and seeing so many things ?" "Because," said Shuka, "whatever I saw, I had my mind fixed upon the vessel so that not a drop of the oil could run down."

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24. पुङ्खानुपुङ्खविषयानुपसेवमानो
धीरो न मुञ्चति मुकुन्दपदारविन्दम् ।
सङ्गीतवाद्यकतितानवशं गतापि
मौलिस्थकुम्भपरिरक्षणधीर्नटीव ॥

The last two lines refer to a very common Indian performance known as Rope-dancing. A rope is attached to two vertical poles. The dancing girl walks along the rope from one pole to the other, with pitchers on her head. The skill lies in the perfect balance she maintains, while walking unsupported along the rope. Tr.

25. The son of Vyasadeva, the reputed author of the great Hindu Epic, the *Mahabharata*. Tr.

26. The King of Videha or Mithila, known as a *Rajarshi i.e.* a *Rishi* or saint among kings. He was the foster-father of Sita, wife of Sri Ramachandra. Tr.

" Exactly so," replied the king, " am I doing all that concerns me here upon earth, with my soul chained to those ever dear Feet." This is just the sort of *bhakta* that a worldly man should aspire to be. The truest *bhakta* is he who lives in constant companionship with Him in the midst of all his earthly concerns. He has fear of none and of nothing. The slightest breath of the wind shakes the whole frame of our mind, but even the fall of the Himalayas will not disturb him. Neither prosperity nor adversity will affect the serene composure of his soul. Says king Janaka :

> "Master of untold riches, I have nothing to call my own. Even if the whole of Mithila were burnt down to ashes, it would be of little moment to me."[27]

I have myself seen some men who are really, as the *Bhagavad Gita* says,

> " Not pained in adversity, nor caring for prosperity."[28]

I knew of one great soul, who was a man of the world. His eldest son was in the highest class of the Medical College in Calcutta, and was a young man of brilliant parts, who had won medals and prizes in all his examinations. This young man, the only hope of his old father, died at twenty-five. We had a meeting, which was to sit at the old gentleman's house on the day

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27. अनन्तं बत मे वित्तं यस्य मे नास्ति किञ्चन ।
मिथिलायां प्रदीप्तायां न मे दह्यति किञ्चन ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CLXXVIII, Sloka 2.

28. दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
Ch. II, Sloka 56.

the young man died. Two friends of mine went to his place at about dusk, and found him talking with some friends in the court-yard. My friends suspected nothing, and one of them was, as usual, proceeding to the room where the meeting was to be held. The old man asked him where he was going, and on being told it was to bring a newspaper, said, " Do not please enter that room. My son—is lying dead there." What, you imagine, were my friend's feelings ? Needless to say, he was amazed at the manner in which this disclosure was made to him by the old father. He quietly came back, and resumed his seat. Then continues the old man, as if nothing had happened to him, "Let us go and hold to-day's meeting at the Dewan's place." What should you think of this gentleman ? Is such equanimity possible, unless the soul is steeped in the love of God ? I will recite just two other incidents of this gentleman's life. Another of his sons died some time after, and when his friends asked him why he did not lament over the son's death, " What claim," said he, " have I upon a free gift ? " A daughter of his died at Bhagalpore, and as his wife was weeping, this gentleman was heard to say, " Why should you weep ? Imagine she is still at Bhagalpore. But in that case you would perhaps expect to meet her. Wait a little, and you will soon do so. And once you meet her next, you will never part." This gentleman is still living, and is a glory to our country.[29]

I have known another gentleman, whose son was lying on death-bed, and his wife was weeping. " Look

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29. Ram Tanu Lahiri was universally reversed for high piety and an ideal simplicity of character. Died 18th August, 1898. Tr.

here," says he to his wife, "The death of this dear son pains me not half so much as the tears of unbelief that fill your eyes." I was sitting by him, and was, as you can well imagine, amazed at these words.

These instances give the lie direct to the notion that a man who concerns himself with the affairs of this world, cannot become pious and God-loving. Every one should disabuse himself of this impression. For, God always helps those that yearn after Him, and it would be finding fault with the Author of this earth, if you think He has left no opening for a man here to attain to a godly life. Is He not the Divinity that presides over the affairs of this life ?

It has already been pointed out how a *bhakta* of the lowest type can by degrees ascend to the topmost rung of the ladder, and how the most impious of men can, by earnestly devoting himself to God, reach the highest bliss. I have already quoted in support the words of Sri Krishna. What reason, then, is there for despair ? Be up and doing, my friends, and He will surely crown our efforts with success. Even the vilest of us shall attain salvation.

Chapter III

HOW BHAKTI CAN BE ACQUIRED

"Either by the mercy of the great, or through a slight measure of Divine grace."[1]

Nobody knows how the grace of God will descend, or upon whom. There are some very beautiful anecdotes in the *Bhaktamala:*[2]

A certain king had a sweeper, who one night resolved to steal the royal treasures. At dead of night, he came and was about to break into the king's bedroom where the treasures were kept, when he heard the queen asking the king, "Are you not going to get your daughter married ?" To this the king replied, "Whom shall I give her to, unless I get a worthy bridegroom?" The queen pressed the king hard, and at length unable to resist her importunities, the king promised to offer the hand of his daughter together with half of his dominions to the first *yogi* he would meet in the neighbouring wood, early next morning. The sweeper heard this conversation, and thought within himself, 'Why this useless toil, then ? Should I be caught, I am sure to lose my head. Rather let me go to the wood, and there sit as a *yogi* that I may easily get the princess and half the kingdom besides.' He then returned to his own dwelling, and there put on the garb of a *yogi*, and scarcely did the day break, when he went out to the wood and seated

1. महत्कृपयैव भगवत्कृपालेशाद्वा ।

Narada Bhaktisutra.

2. A *Vaishnava* work which relates the life-stories of some devotees. Tr.

himself in a contemplative posture at its nearest end. A short while after, he perceived the king approaching with his retinue. The king drew near, and prostrated himself before the saint, who had lost himself in deep meditation, and would not be so easily disturbed. The king waited and waited, till at length the great sage vouchsafed to open his eyes. The king fell at his feet, and begged of him to go and visit his city. This, after great supplications, the holy man condescended to do. The king escorted the saint with great *eclat*. And, when the city was reached, he took him to the palace, seated him upon the throne, himself washed his feet, while the queen kept fanning. And then the king and the queen with folded hands addressed the hermit thus : "Mighty sage, we have a handsome girl. If it be thy pleasure to accept her hand, permit us to make you a gift of her, together with half this kingdom." This set the man thinking : 'It is only the garments of a saint that make the royal couple humble themselves at my feet. How much more, then, should I be able to humble down kings and queens before me, and how many such princesses and kingdoms should I acquire, if I were the real saint that I feign to be ?' With this he rushed out of the throne, and left the place at once. God had suddenly thrown the gates of his heart wide open, and there streamed in through them the transcendent rays of Heaven's love. The vile objects of this earth could tempt him no longer. He had come to steal, and went back blessed.

There is another and a similar story. A fowler went to the side of a lake to trap birds. The birds flew off as they saw him with his bow and arrow, and

he therefore hid himself behind a tree. He then saw a *Vaishnava* approaching, who came and bathed in the water. He observed not a single bird fled at the sight of the *Vaishnava.*[3] The fowler then thought, 'Let me wear the clothes of a *Vaishnava,* and I shall then require no bow or arrow to catch birds, as they shall not then fly from me.' Guised like a *Vaishnava,* he then got down into the lake. Not a single bird budged at his sight this time. But where was the heart to catch them ? In a few short moments, the fowler had turned into a different man. Examples like these can be multiplied. You all know the story of the life of the robber Ratnakara.[4]

Only a few days ago, an incident took place, which is really admirable. A man belonging to one of the lower castes, who is still alive, was addicted to drinking and all concomitant vices. So spiteful was he, that he was one day taking a venomous snake which he had put into an earthen pot, to be let loose in an enemy's house. The man, however, fell into the water from a bamboo bridge he was crossing, and the reptile thus got off. It was only by this act of Providence that his enemy's life was saved. Besotted with drink, he was another day going somewhere, when he halted in a shop on the way. There he was sitting, when the following strain was sung by some one near-by:

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3. *Vaishnavas* abhor taking animal life. They eat neither fish nor flesh. Tr.

4. This is believed to have been the former name of Valmiki, the author of the great Sanskrit Epic, the *Ramayana.* The story goes how he used to waylay passers-by, kill them, and take all they had. A meeting with a sage changed his life, and he applied himself to deep contemplation for a number of years, in the course of which he never left his seat, so that an ant-hill formed around his body, and this gave him his name Valmiki (*Valmika,* an ant-hill). He eventually became a great poet, and wrote the *Ramayana.* Tr.

> " O Thou Protector of the lowly, bless this poor and weak child, that he may, in life and in death, sing the glory of truth."[5]

At a blessed moment did these words enter his ears. What a marvellous change they wrought in him! Divine mercy shone upon him, and he at once resolved to lay the foundation of a new life. It has really been so, for he has now shaken off all his former habits, and is now leading the peaceful life of a village physician. When he gets a rupee or more, he makes it over to the funds of the Brahmo Samaj, keeping for his own maintenance such sums only as amount to less than a rupee. Every one amongst us is familiar with the story of Jagai and Madhai,[6] how through the mercy of Nityananda they were blessed with a pure life. But this was surely mercy that came from above.

But God's mercy is always with us, if only we have eyes to see. For his mercy " pours upon the world in a ceaseless stream," as a Bengali song puts

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5. *Brahmasangita* or the Hymn-book of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, 8th Edition, p. 188. Tr.

6. These were two notorious characters living in Navadwipa at the time of Sri Chaitanya. Sri Chaitanya was opposed to the lifeless ritualistic creed of the day, and preached a faith of pure love to God, and the union of all castes and races in His worship. Himself and his disciples were therefore persecuted by the people of Navadwipa generally, but by none so much as by the two ruffians Jagai and Madhai. Sri Chaitanya at length resolved to conquer them. A party including Nityananda, perhaps the greatest of Sri Chaitanya's disciples, soon met the brothers, who fell furiously upon them with cudgels and brick-bats. This put to flight the rest of the party save Nityananda, who, though severely wounded, came up to the ruffians with open arms, singing the name of his beloved One, resolved to win them over to His love for ever. This had the desired effect, for, the two brothers were completely overpowered, and yielded to the sway of love, and soon came to be known among the most zealous followers of Sri Chaitanya. Tr.

it. It is the spirit of waywardness that keeps us away from its influence. Any one that has the inclination to feel it, does easily perceive it manifested in all directions. God is ever anxious for us, and if only we are anxious for Him, all our sins will soon vanish, and our hearts will be illumined with the light of His countenance. Paramahamsa Ramakrishna used to say, " God is like a magnet and man a piece of iron, which is being constantly drawn towards the great Magnet. But like mud that covers the iron, sins prevent man's adherence to the Magnet, and all that is therefore needed is to free the iron of its mud." And this can be done only by repentance and prayer. Whoever earnestly seeks for Him, to him do His mercy and His attributes reveal themselves. This requires little learning, riches or rank :

> " That Self cannot be gained by a study of the Vedas, nor by intelligence, nor by vast learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. To him the Self manifests itself."[7]

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7. नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा वृणते तनूं स्वाम् ॥
Kathopanishad, Valli 2, Sloka 23.

Chapter IV

OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF BHAKTI AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM

The path of devotion is beset with thorns, which must be weeded out. Some of them are internal and some external. Among the latter, the worst is evil company. Narada in his *Bhaktisutra* says:

"By all means, avoid bad company."[1]

Bad company, according to our *Shastras,* comprehends bad books, bad scenes, bad words and bad songs as well—even the sight of the pairing of lower animals—in short, all that may give rise to bad thoughts. If the study of a good book can elevate the soul, if the sight of a good picture can purify the heart, if a good song or a good speech can call forth noble sentiments in the mind, why should not a bad book, an impure picture or an obscene song do the opposite ? I know of a young man who was studying in one of our colleges. The obscene passages of his Sanskrit text-book so haunted his imagination that they brought in bad dreams during sleep. And yet I have seen but few young men so earnestly striving after purity, as he was. Bad songs have even a worse influence, for none can deny that songs make a deeper impression upon the mind than books.

There is hardly anything so utterly ruinous to the soul, as bad company. Ask all that have trodden the

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1. दुःसङ्गः सर्वथैव त्याज्यः ।

Sutra 43.

path of vice, and you will meet with the same answer everywhere—bad company was the cause. There are few that will guide you in the path of virtue, though there is no end of those that will lead you in the ways of sin. Strive after purity, and the world will throw obstacles in your way. They will scoff and sneer at you. Not only that, they will sing vicious songs to you, hold out obscene pictures before you, utter bad words in your presence—all with the gratuitous intention of diverting your mind from the path of virtue. Parents even have been known to do likewise. What a shame !

Evil company is the hotbed of all sins, and there is therefore nothing which stands so much in the way of devotion. Says Narada:

> "Because it causes lust, wrath, delusion, loss of memory, loss of reason, and, finally, total wreck of the man."[2]

Association with bad people, reading bad books, hearing bad songs, excites the passions. And the passionate man is sure to fly into a rage, if anything stands in the way of his lust:

> "Man musing on the objects of sense, conceiveth an attachment to these; from attachment ariseth desire; from desire anger cometh forth."[3]

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2. कामक्रोधमोहस्मृतिभ्रंशबुद्धिनाशसर्वनाशकारणत्वात् ।

Bhaktisutra, Sutra 44.

3. ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

Srimadbhagavadgita, Ch. II, Sloka 62.

This translation has been adapted from Annie Besant's Translation of the *Srimadbhagavadgita*. Tr.

Seek not therefore earthly pleasures, nor the company of those that seek them. The duties of this life have been entrusted to you by God, and remember Him in all that you do. Hunt not for money alone, or the gratification of your senses. The *Bhagavad Gita* continues:

> "From anger proceedeth delusion; from delusion confused memory; from confused memory the destruction of reason, and from destruction of reason, man perishes."[4]

Delusion clouds the vision, and hence arises a loss of the power of discrimination, a loss of all the wisdom that was acquired, and of all, the longing that was formed for spiritual life. Read the history of the crimes that come up for trial before our Sessions Courts. Are not they the outcome of an utter loss of all power of reason? First, there was anger that arose out of lust, lust for money or lust for carnal pleasure, and then anger was followed by infatuation, and the result was that lessons of virtue were all lost upon the man, and reason was gone, leaving the man a brute capable of committing crimes revolting to human nature. Is not lust at the root of all this? And does not lust grow in strength in evil company?

Shakespeare, that unerring student of human nature, says: "Youth to itself rebels, though none else near."[5] I am sure every sincere young man

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4. क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥
Ch. II, Sloka 63.

5. *Hamlet*, Act I, Sc. 3.

will bear testimony to the truth of this statement. If, then, we are really so weak, shall we allow evil company to fan the flame? Narada realises this, when he asserts:

> "These propensities, though at first like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea, by reason of bad company."[6]

Who is there among us that does not feel the passions surging within him? There are some who want you to rush into bad associations, to show that you have the courage to face sin, and are not a coward who will fly from it. They solemnly declare:

> "They alone are firm, whose hearts will not yield to temptation."[7]

God save us from such heroism! Even Jesus was tempted by Satan. Buddha had to fight with *Mara* (Lust) in the midst of his austerities, and the prince of *yogis*, Mahadeva, had to feel a thrill of ungodly emotion disturb his contemplation. And we, who are not worthy of unfastening the latchet of their shoes, we vaunt of having strength enough to brave the stronghold of Vice, and crush the demon altogether! Let none of my friends be ever ambitious of being so bold. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."[8] May we always bear this in mind, and may we keep ourselves at the furthest distance from

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6. तरङ्गायिता अपीमे सङ्गात् समुद्रायन्ति ।
Bhaktisutra, Sutra 45.
7. विकारहेतौ सति विक्रियन्ते
येषां न चेतांसि त एव धीराः ।
Kumarasambhava, Canto 1, Verse 59.
8. Matthew, Ch. VI, verse 13.

everything that would stir up the passions within us. Narada lays it down as a rule:

> "Listen not to talks about women, rich men, atheists and enemies."[9]

Talk about women means, of course, voluptuous talk about them, and talk about rich men refers to their luxurious living and such habits as would turn the mind from the principle of plain living and high thinking. Narrations about their pomp and splendour, unmixed with any higher thoughts, are apt to inflame the mind for the acquisition of wealth at the sacrifice of honesty and goodness. Talks about atheists tend to shake one's faith in God, and fill the mind with sceptical ideas. Talks about enemies rouse bad feelings, such as malice, spite, desire for revenge and so on, and divert the mind from high and noble pursuits.

Nothing that may breed in the mind lust, anger, avarice, envy and the kindred feelings should be seen, heard, touched or even thought of. The reading of bad novels and dramas is therefore prohibited. Bad words, bad songs and bad sights must be carefully avoided. So the *Rishis* of old sang with their pupils before beginning daily lessons:

> "May we hear with our ears or see with our eyes nothing but what is pure, so that with our senses unperturbed, singing hymns in Divine praise, we may attain life as long as that of the gods."[10]

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9. स्त्रीधननास्तिकवैरिचरित्रं न श्रवणीयम् ।
Narada Bhaktisutra, Sutra 63.

10. भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देव भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्रा ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टूवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

The plain meaning of this is that if nothing impure is seen or heard, there is little chance of any unholy thought creeping into the mind, and if the mind be holy, the body will be healthy, and the necessary outcome must be a long life.

Let us next see what are the internal enemies of man. When these have been fought and overcome, external agencies can do little harm, though that is a stage which it is extremely difficult to reach. The internal enemies are these: Lust, Anger, Greed, Infatuation, Vanity, Envy with its attendant vices, Desultoriness, Wordly Wisdom, Insincerity, Loquacity, Wrangling propensity and Religiosity.

From Lust will follow the ten vices enumerated in the *Manusamhita:*[11]

> "Love of hunting, gambling, sleeping by day, slandering, fellowship with bad women, intoxication, indulgence in singing, dance or music, and aimlessly wandering about."

There are again eight vices that will result from Anger:

> "Iniquity, rashness, persecution, jealousy, captiousness, defrauding a man of his dues, harsh words and cruelty."[12]

We have to struggle hard in order to keep out of the ways of these vices.

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11. मृगयाक्षो दिवास्वप्नः परीवादः स्त्रियो मदः ।
तौर्य्यत्रिकं वृथाटचा च कामजो दशको गणः ॥
Ch. VII, Sloka 47.

12. पैशुन्यं साहसं द्रोह ईर्ष्यासूयार्थदूषणम् ।
वाग्दण्डजञ्च पारुष्यं क्रोधजोऽपि गणोऽष्टकः ॥
Ch. VII, Sloka 48.

There are some general means for avoiding sin, while some special measures may be suggested for the prevention of each particular vice. I shall first deal with the general ways:

(i) There are some sins which owe their existence to the influence of external agencies. Always keep out of the way of that influence. Bhishmadeva in the *Mahabharata* relates a story to Yudhisthira, and concludes it thus:

> "You have no desire for a thing till you know what it is like. It is only after you have seen it, or heard of it or touched it, that you get a liking for it. Therefore, the best principle for a man is not to take, touch, or see whatever is likely to taint the imagination."[13]

(ii) Think of the evils that are brought on by the vice that has influenced you, the disastrous consequences lust or anger brings in its train, the inevitable punishment ordained by Providence for all sinful actions. The mind that will earnestly ponder over such thoughts, can surely feel but little inclination towards evil. Every vice will indeed bear its baneful fruits here upon earth. In the *Hitopadesa*[14]:

> "Sins of the more serious kind will bring on their dire consequences here in this life, be it in

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13. न खल्वप्यरसज्ञस्य कामः क्वचन जायते ।
संस्पर्शाद्दर्शनाद्वापि श्रवणाद्वापि जायते ॥
अप्राशनमसंस्पर्शमसंदर्शनमेव च ।
पुरुषस्यैष नियमो मन्ये श्रेयो न संशयः ।
Shantiparva, Ch. CLXXX, Slokas 30, 33.

14. त्रिभिर्वर्षैस्त्रिभिर्मासैस्त्रिभिः पक्षैस्त्रिभिर्दिनैः ।
अत्युत्कटः पापपुण्यैरिहैव फलमश्नुते ॥

three days, three fortnights, three months, or three years."

He who has realised in the depths of his heart that the irresistible consequences of a sinful course of life will be loathsome diseases, a general weakening of the brains and of the nervous system, loss of memory, lowering of the vital functions, decay of physical beauty, a total absence of cheerfulness, and lastly, premature death; he who has realised that the retribution of sin will visit him in this life as also in the next, and that "Chastity is life and Sensuality is Death," that, as the *Sivasamhita*[15] says, "From loss of semen results death, from a conservation of it comes life," can he ever take to sinful ways?

(iii) Think of the penalties of vice and the rewards of virtue. The history of individual as well as of national life will illustrate the truth that the seductive ways of sin lead but to ruin, while a virtuous course of life promises never-ending bliss. You have not to go far to test this truth. Look into your own soul, and you will be satisfied. How often have we seen crowned heads bow down in reverence at the feet of godliness found even in the humblest walks of life! Have not the greatest of princes been often exposed to shame and ridicule for having persisted in a sinful course of life? Bhishmadeva in the *Mahabharata* says:

> "Poor are the sinful, for their life slips on from misery to misery, fear to fear, and death to death. Rich are the virtuous, who are the

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15. मरणं बिन्दुपातेन जीवनं बिन्दुधारणात् ।

masters of their passions; they pass from joy to joy, from heaven to heaven, and from bliss to bliss."[16]

Who indeed is so pitiable as the sinner who feels the pangs of remorse within himself and the odium of disgrace in society, and who is lost both to this world and to the next? The man is never at peace with himself or the world, though he outwardly appears to be so. The virtuous soul has no desire for earthly pleasure, and cares little for the sovereignty of the three worlds. Here are the words of an ascetic to a king:

> "We are as happy clothed in bark, as you in purple. There is, however, this difference between you and me that bark and silk are all the same to me, while to you they are widely different. Truly poor is he who has always a growing and insatiable thirst for the pleasures of this life. If the mind is content, what is the difference between the rich man and the poor?"[17]

He alone is rich who is content and has no feeling of want, and poor is he who is always lashed with a

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16. दुर्भिक्षादेव दुर्भिक्षं क्लेशात् क्लेशं भयाद्भयम् ।
मृतेभ्यः प्रमृतं यान्ति दरिद्राः पापकारिणः ॥
उत्सवादुत्सवं यान्ति स्वर्गात् स्वर्गं सुखात् सुखम् ।
श्रद्दधानाश्च दान्ताश्च धनाढ्याः शुभकारिणः ॥

Shantiparva, Ch. CLXXXI, Slokas 3, 4.

17. वयमिह परितुष्टा वल्कलैस्त्वं दुकूलैः
सम इह परितोषो निर्विशेषो विशेषः ।
स तु भवतु दरिद्रो यस्य तृष्णा विशाला
मनसि च परितुष्टे कोऽर्थवान् को दरिद्रः ॥

Vairagyashataka, Sloka 53.

burning desire for the objects of this earth, and who therefore incessantly feels the pinch of want. And once begun, the hunt after pleasures knows not where to end:

"Desires are never quenched by enjoyment. It rather inflames them, as clarified butter does fire." [18]

(iv) Think of Death. This will act as a deterrent from sin. When you are about to do something sinful, your hands would surely desist, if some one in whose words you have the most absolute confidence were to tell you that you would die in a few hours more. He that is ever mindful of death, can not have the heart to commit sins. Here is a beautiful story in point: There was a king who was seized with a mortal malady. A *Sanyasi* came to him and prescribed for him a cordial, which was the juice of some herb. The king began to drink the juice every day. The *Sanyasi* also drank of the same juice, and several times as much as did the king. The king's health soon improved, and he grew stronger in physique. But it excited impure thoughts in his mind, and they began to grow day by day. The king then once asked the *Sanyasi*, "How is it that I feel so much troubled with evil thoughts, while the juice does not seem to affect you in the least, though you drink so many times more that I do? The *Sanyasi* replied, "I will answer your question later on, O king, but, meanwhile, let me tell you that your death comes off on the

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18. न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥
Manusamhita, Ch. II, Sloka 94.

thirtieth day from this date, and you shall henceforth take seven times the quantity of juice that you have hitherto taken." The king began to drink accordingly, and he was making wonderful progress in health. But where were the evil thoughts? They had totally disappeared. A few days after, the *Sanyasi* came to the king and asked him, "Do you find any disturbance now?" "With far other thoughts," says the king, "is my mind now occupied—it is the thought of death—how can I think of anything else?" Then said the *Sanyasi,* "It is yet about a month for you to die, and still the fear of death has driven away all evil propensities from your mind. To me death seems always following close at the heels. How then could I entertain unholy thoughts, though I drank of the juice so many times more than you did?"

(v) Study the lives of those that have triumphed over sin, and associate with those that are struggling with it. They will infuse a new life into your dead soul, and kindle the fire that may be smouldering in it. When you read of the way in which Jesus Christ tempted by Satan defiantly hurled at him, "Get thee behind me, Satan," who is there that will not feel the blood warm up in emulation of that conquering spirit? Or picture to yourself the noble sight of the great Shakya Sinha fighting the Demon *Mara* (Lust). What a wonderful display of valour! Like a lion he roars out:

> "*Meru,* the king of mountains, may move out of its foundations, the universe itself may vanish into space, the sun and the moon and the stars may run out of their orbits and come down upon the earth, all the beings of the universe may one

day be of the same mind, and even may the infinite Ocean dry up—yet shalt thou not, O *Mara,* move me an inch from the root of this great tree where I have seated myself."[19]

When at length this Demon Lust assails him with a full set of his weapons, the valiant *yogi* makes the four quarters of the globe quake with these thrilling words:

"Should all the three thousand worlds be filled with *Maras,* and should each of them have a sword in his hand as huge as *Meru* the highest of mountains, and were they all to wage the severest battle with me, yet shall they not make me budge in the least, clad as I am in the panoply of virtue."[20]

Verily, *Mara* had to give in. Will not words like these brace us up in the fierce battle we have to constantly wage against the Enemy of man?

Association with friends having an ardour for spiritual progress, conversation on religious topics with them, and even to think of them, often prove a material help in keeping out of sin's way. It is of

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19. मेरुः पर्वतराज स्थानतु चलेत् सर्वं जगन्नो भवेत्
सर्व्वे तारकसङ्घ भूमि प्रपतेत् सज्योतिषेन्द्रो नभात् ।
सर्व्वे सत्व करेय एकमतयाः शुष्येन्महासागरो
नत्वेव द्रुमराजमूलोपगतश्चाल्येत अस्पद्विधः ॥

20. सर्व्वेयं त्रिसाहस्र मेदिनी मारैः प्रपूर्णा भवेत्
सर्व्वेषां यथ मेरू पर्वतवरः पाणीषू खड्गो भवेत् ।
ते मह्यं न समर्थ लोम चलितु प्रागेव मां घातितुं
कुर्य्यांचापि हि विग्रहे स्म वर्म्मितेन दृधं ॥

Lalitavistara, Ch. XXI.
(Slokas defective, as found in original—Ed.)

special value to those that have not been blessed with parents able or willing to impart religious training to their children in boyhood. It is not necessary that such friends should belong to the same religious creed. For, real friendship is quite possible between men of different religious persuasions.

Pure love is often an effective antidote to sin. You are on the point of doing something that is sinful. Can you have the heart to do it, if one with whom you have formed the closest friendship were to appear before you in person? It is a proved truth that vicious propensities will subside in the company of friends who meet you in a truly religious spirit. This happens for three reasons:

First, because no true friendship is formed with anybody unless you are attracted to him by some striking features in his character. Such a friendship, therefore, springs out of a genuine and loving regard for him. This cannot but lead to an emulation of his virtues, with the result that your own defects will stand out in clear relief before your eyes, and you will then feel a strong desire to dissect and remedy them.

Secondly, because friends will always converse on wholesome topics, and we all know the beneficial effect of such conversation.

Thirdly, because exchange of noble sentiments and pious thoughts infuses strength into the soul. When you feel that he whom you hold dearest to your heart, whose friendship you value more than anything else in the world, hates to do something, would you yourself set your hand to it and run the risk of forfeiting such friendship? Besides, you lay bare to

your friend the secrets of your heart, and the more you do so, the greater the sympathy and help you get from him. And this sympathy means an accession of strength to you in the struggle against sin and temptation.

I shall relate to you just one incident to illustrate the value of real friendship. A boy aged only fourteen had to live away from his family and among persons most of whom were addicted to the vice of drinking. The master of the house himself did not hesitate even to admit bad women into the house. One day, some of these people were drinking and relating to the boy the pleasures of drink. They pressed the boy hard to have a sip. The little boy resisted the temptation for a while, and was then about to give way to it, when lo, there arose before his mind's eye the figure of a friend in whose company he had passed hours in holy conversation. The two friends had also at times talked together against the habit of drinking. Should he drink now, how would he, thought the boy, shew his face to that dear friend, unless he wanted to conceal the fact from him? And how could he conceal any thing from one he loved so dearly? This brought on a struggle in his mind, and after a hard fight, the battle was won, and love triumphed over sin. Such incidents are not rare.

(vi) Reflect on the attributes of God, and pray to Him. Take your vices one by one, and pray for the removal of each one of them singly, instead of for all generally. Contemplate specially that particular attribute of the Divine Being which is opposed to the particular vice you select. As you proceed, carry on a searching self-examination all the time.

Take each individual instance of transgression, and lay thyself low at the altar of the Immaculate. Prayer in reference to each particular vice will be more efficacious than prayer for the removal of vice generally.

(vii) Try to realise the omnipresence of God. There is not an inch of space in the universe which His eyes do not penetrate. With equal vision doth He see things far and near. You can escape the eye of man, but who can ever fly beyond the range of His vision? The feeblest thought that peeps into your mind, He taketh note of it, and examineth it most minutely. Is not He the chastiser of sin? And doth He require any other witness to bear testimony to what He Himself seeth? Himself the severe Dispenser of Justice, sin never fails to meet with its proper retribution at His hands. Where can the sinner fly? In trackless forests, in mountain-caves or in the depths of the ocean, wherever thou goest, there, there—those all-seeing Eyes. Where shalt thou fly or hide thyself, and where shalt thou lay thy head? Around and within, those Eyes are ever there. Who is it that can escape their pursuit? Thou sinner, that fanciest thyself lodged in thy closet shut out from man's gaze, look up and see. What is it that overspreads the ceiling above thy head and the floor beneath thy feet? And whose vision is it that pierces the very core of thy heart? From every inch of the walls that surround you, whose vision is it that darts upon you like a flame? Ah, thou art a prisoner in the meshes of that all-encompassing look. Above and below, to thy right and to thy left—why, all over thy body, from within every pore of thy hairs, and the very

flesh and the bones that make up thy frame, yet deeper than that, in those secret depths of thy heart where none can descend, what is it that haunts thee all the moments of the day? That highest Dispenser of Justice who punisheth all sinners and the might of whose sceptre will crush thy sinful heart, watcheth all, and observeth whatever thou dost:

> "If thou thinkest thou art alone, thou knowest not that silent ancient Being who dwelleth in man's heart and who seeth all. Ah, thou art sinning in the very presence of Him that seeth thy sins—each one of them. The sinner thinks none has seen his secret doings though the gods observe them, and also that Being who resides in the soul."[21]

(viii) Think of the wonderful potentialities of man, powers vouchsafed unto him by his Almighty Father, and call forth those powers into the fight you have to wage with sin. 'We are all descended from the All-powerful, He is always with us,' thoughts like these will infuse spirit into the feeblest soul. 'I am clad in the invulnerable panoply of divine protection, what power has the hand of Satan against it?' How can the forces of sin avail against this castle of God? Am I not born from the Source of all power? Why should I be afraid of sin? As the wind bloweth before

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21. एकोऽहमस्मीति च मन्यसे त्वं
न हृच्छयं वेत्सि मुनिं पुराणम् ।
यो वेदिता कर्मणः पापकस्य
तस्यान्तिके त्वं वृजिनं करोषि ॥
मन्यते पापकं कृत्वा न कश्चिद्वेत्ति मामिति ।
विदन्ति चैनं देवाश्च यश्चैवान्तरपुरुषः ॥

Mahabharata Adiparva, Ch. LXXIV, Slokas 28, 29.

it a piece of straw, so shall I sweep all sin out of my way. Will the lion's whelp sneak before the jackal?' Revolve these thoughts in your mind, and you will easily conquer sin. It was in this strain that Ramaprasada,[22] the great devotee, sang:

> "Why dost thou look so sad, like a boy that has lost his mother? Strange, that a snake should be afraid of the frog! Son of the All-powerful Mother, what, fearest thou the pangs of Death?"

What worldly cares had the great Carlyle to battle with, and yet how bravely did he face and conquer them! Temptation could not move him an inch. Dire want stared him in the face; very often he had not even provision for the morrow, one step aside from the path of rectitude would have brought him affluence; yet did he boldly stand for Truth, relying upon the Divine strength that came from within. He that has learnt to perceive the divine fire that is always burning within human soul, will never falter.

The above are some of the means that can be adopted for the prevention of vice in general. I will now address myself to the enumeration of some special remedies for the prevention of each kind of vice in particular:

I. LUST

(i) Think over the disastrous consequences brought on by lustfulness. Experts agree in the opinion that the seminal fluid is the quintessence of blood. Dr. Louis, an eminent physician, says, "All eminent physiologists agree that the most precious atoms of the blood enter into the composition of the semen."[23]

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22. See p. 19 foot-note 6, *ante.*
23. From *'Chastity'* by Dr. Louis.—Tr.

Evil acts and evil thought destroy the semen. And what can be more ruinous to health? Preservation of the semen by practising continence helps the development of the body and the mind. Writes Dr. Nicholls: "It is a medical, a physiological fact, that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both the sexes. In a pure and orderly life, this matter is absorbed. It goes back into the circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscular tissue. This life of man, carried back and diffused through the system, makes him manly, strong, brave and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated and a prey to sexual irritation, disordered function, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity and death."[24] Indeed, as the *Shivasamhita*[25] says:

"Continence is life, incontinence is death."

Patanjali reiterates the same view in his *Yogasutra*[26]:

"In steady continence is acquisition of manly power."

In another place, Dr. Nicholls writes: "The suspension of the use of the generative organs is attended with a noble increase of bodily and mental vigour and spiritual life." Citing the instances of St. Paul and Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Louis observes that an absolute continence tends to an increase of the physi-

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24. From *Esoteric Anthropology* by Dr. Nicholls. Tr.
25. मरणं बिन्दुपातेन जीवनं बिन्दुधारणात् ।

Patal IV, Sloka 60.

26. ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः ।

Pada II, Sutra 38.

cal and mental vigour of man. Says he, "Nature finds use for them all in building up a keener brain and more vital and enduring nerves and muscles." Shiva in the *Jnanasamkalani Tantra*[27] thus speaks of the virtues of continence :

> "The wise do not regard the ordinary forms of asceticism as real asceticism. Continence is the highest asceticism. He that is continent is a god, not a man."

As you grow in chastity, you grow in physical strength and mental power, and as you indulge in abuse, you lose the glow of your countenance, the cheerfulness of your mind and the vigour of your intellect. Once you take to abuses, the most nourishing food will not prevent the slow undermining of the health. Dr. Falret is of the opinion that "Debility of intellect and especially of the memory characterises the mental alienation of the licentious." Want of due control over the passions is the cause of various complaints so frequent among our young men—weakness of the brain, slowness of perception, loss of memory, indifference, restlessness, loss of appetite, dyspepsia, nervous debility, palpitation of the heart, headache, and many other almost incurable diseases.

Always keep yourself aloof from women and other sources of temptation. You must put down evil thought with a strong hand. For, evil thoughts are the root of vice, and are as sinful as evil deeds. Therefore, keep clear of them, and the path of virtue lies straight before you. There are many who are harrow-

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27. न तपस्तप इत्याहुर्ब्रह्मचर्यस्तपोत्तमः ।
ऊर्ध्वरेता भवेद् यस्तु स देवो न तु मानुषः ॥

ed by evil thoughts, though they do no sinful act. To one of these men who came to consult Dr. Louis, his advice was :

"Fully realise to yourself the grave and ruinous consequences of evil thought. This will set you on your guard when evil thoughts will come. The moment they come, exert yourself to divert the mind to some other object. A real earnestness to drive away evil thought will keep you on the alert, so much so that even if it appears in dream, you will at once wake up. Several men have borne testimony to this fact. And, should the enemy appear when you are awake, it will not be very difficult for you to cope with him if only you are sufficiently watchful. If for a moment you think you will not succeed in banishing an evil thought, at once get up and set about some work involving physical labour. One effort after another will gradually make the task easy, and in a few weeks, you will obtain a complete control over your thoughts. Besides this, always pay special attention to the laws of health. The indolent and the greedy often fall an easy prey to passion. Therefore take regular physical exercise or constitutional walks so as to give yourself two or three sweats a day. Take such food only as is nutritious and easily digestible, and is not at the same time likely to excite the passions. Go to bed before the night is far advanced, and get up early in the morning. Sleep in a well-ventilated room and drink a sufficient quantity of cold water when you go to bed, and also when you get up from it."

These directions were followed by that man, and

he and several other young men who acted upon them got rid of this baneful vice.

(ii) There are some practical rules which ought to be observed by those that strive after purity. Lust originates in रजोगुण *i.e.* the quality of passion:

> "This Lust, this Anger, arise out of the quality of passion or *rajasa* energy."[28]

Rajasa food, *i.e.* food that may tend to excite passion, must therefore be avoided:

> "Any food that is too bitter, too sour, too brackish, too hot, too pungent, too dry or too irritating, is desired by a person of a passionate nature."[29]

Food of this nature must therefore be avoided. Dr. Louis considers eggs, crabs, fish, meat, onions, mustard, chilli, salt, and things that are too sweet or highly spiced or otherwise difficult of digestion, as unfavourable to the control of passions. The food used by Hindu widows is just the sort of diet that ought to be used by those that strive after chastity :

> "Rock-salt, plantain, *amalaki*, jack-fruit, mango, myrobalan, cow's milk, clarified butter, rice, green gram, sesame, and barley-corn."[30]

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28. काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः।
Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Ch. III, Sloka 37.

29. कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः॥
Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Ch. XVII, Sloka 9.

30. सैन्धवं कदली धात्री पनसाम्रहरीतकी।
गोक्षीरं गोघृतञ्चैव धान्यमुद्गतिला यवाः॥
Amalaki is *Phylanthus emblica*. *Mudga* is *Phaseolus mungo radiatus*. This sloka is from one of the *Smritis*. Tr.

Amongst pulses, gram and green gram or chicken-pea are good. Lentil and *mudga* are stimulating, hence not beneficial. Dr. Louis recommends the drinking of cold water before going to bed, and also when getting up early in the morning. But the water must be good filtered water.

Unclean bowels are, in his opinion, very injurious. Drinking water as prescribed above helps the cleaning of bowels.

Use hard bed and hard pillows. Cotton mattresses are injurious. All luxury in dress must be avoided.

Sitting up to a late hour of the night is harmful. Read some good book, and pass some time in holy meditation, before you go to bed.

Occasional fasts are good, such as is observed by many Hindus on the eleventh day of the moon. They benefit both the body and the mind.

Rice should not be taken on the night of the full moon, as well as of the new moon.

Daily physical exercise should be carefully attended to. Gymnastics and fast walking in open air do immense good in this direction. Give yourself two or three sweats every day. Some of the methods adopted by Hindu *yogis* known as *Asana, Mudra* and *Pranayama,*[31] are of special efficacy for this purpose. A few days' practice will convince every one of their utility. The very methods of sitting will have some

31. *Asana:* Particular modes or attitudes of sitting practised by *yogis.* Two of these modes are referred to below, viz. *Padmasana* and *Siddhasana.*

Mudra: Gestures arising from the disposition of the upper limbs in various forms, e.g., when the tongue is reversed and pressed into the hollow of the head and the sight is fixed at a spot in the middle of the two eye-brows, the posture is called *Khecharimudra.*

effect upon certain organs of the body. By *Pranayama* the mind gradually proceeds from the gross to the subtle. It therefore exercises a wholesome check upon sexual irritation. When some evil thought disturbs your mind, at once take to *Padmasana* or *Siddhasana*[32] and practise *Pranayama*, the thought will leave you immediately. Should any one find this measure not acceptable or unworkable, let him take to some sort of physical exercise directly the thought arises, and in most cases he will succeed in driving the thought away. Loudly repeat and sing the name of God. That will be of great help. Putting on tight dress for the lower limbs, such as *Koupin*, is beneficial.

> "Not being in pain from disease and without cause, one must not touch the cavities of the body and the concealed hairs."[33]

But always bear in mind that the primary condition of success is an earnest longing for purity. With-

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Pranayama: Inspiration, retention and expiration of breath according to fixed periods of time, practised for concentration of mind. "All the functions of the organs being preceded by that of the breath—there being always a correlation of breath and mind in their respective functions—the breath when overcome by stopping all the functions of the organs, effects the concentration of the thinking principle to one object." Dr. Rajendralal Mitra's '*Aphorisms of Patanjali*,' page 42.

32. *Padmasana:* "The right foot should be placed on the left thigh, and the left foot on the right thigh; the hands should be crossed behind the back and the two great toes should be held thereby; the chin should be bent down on the chest; and in this posture the eyes should be directed to the tip of the nose. It is called *Padmasana* and is highly beneficial in overcoming all diseases." Ibid, page 103.

Siddhasana: "Place the left ankle on the *Membrum Virile*, and thereupon put the right ankle, and it completes the *Siddhasana*." Ibid, page 105.

33. अनातुरः स्वानि खानि न स्पृशेदनिमित्ततः ।
रोमाणि च रहस्यानि सर्वाण्येव विवर्जयेत् ॥

Manusamhita, Ch. IV, Sloka 144.

out that, take what external precautions you will, they will avail nothing.

(iii) Another means of great efficacy is to keep yourself always engaged. Some one asked Swami Dayananda, "Do you ever feel the disturbance of passion?" and the reply of the great Swami was, "I am always busy. How can lust approach me?"

(iv) Make a note of some of the most striking experiences of your life—incidents that may have at times filled your mind with love of God or fear of Him, or which may have brought to your mind a strong conviction of the unreality of this life, or occasions on which you have shown love or kindness towards some fellow-being. Record them on a piece of paper, and look at it whenever passion disturbs your mind. The current of thought that will set in on a revival of the memory of these events, will effectually keep out the passion. Many have profited by this method.

(v) Repeat within your mind the word 'Purity', go on uttering it loudly, always cogitate upon it, write it upon a piece of paper and bring it up before your mind when an impure thought crosses it. Contemplate the effect of leading a pure life, how it elevates the soul, and enhances personal beauty as well. Here is an instance of how the old queen Churala, wife of Raja Shikhidhwaja,

> "By constant meditation resulting in realisation of self, bloomed like a lovely creeper with budding blossoms."[34]

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34. स्वविवेकघनाभ्यासवशादात्मोदयेन सा
शुशुभे शोभना पुष्पलतेवाभिनवोद्गता ॥
Yogavasishtha, Nirvanaprakarana, Ch. LXXIX, Sloka 9.

Look at some of the old *Sannyasins* at Banaras or Hardwar, and you will be convinced how purity can make a man handsome even in old age.

(vi) 'Human body is the temple of God. I must keep it pure and unpolluted as a shrine'—let this thought be always present in your mind, and it will help you in keeping out impure thoughts. This is the idea that governs the Hindu theory of *Shatchakra*.[35] St. Paul emphasises it in addressing the sinners:

> "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."[36]

(vii) Loneliness is a great help to the culture of devotion, but to the beginner who is troubled with lascivious fancies, it often proves a hindrance. So he had better not remain alone.

(viii) Engaging oneself in deep scientific or philosophical studies is a great preventive. I know of a man who is highly learned in Botany. He was heard to observe once, "I have never yet had time to think of woman." The *Panchadashi* gives us this wholesome advice:

> "So long you are not asleep or dead, pass your time in the study of the *Vedanta*. Do not let lust have an opportunity to enter your mind."[37]

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35. *Shatchakra* is probably the several plexuses of the sympathetic system supposed to control the vital functions. They are represented as six lotuses over which are seated the God Shiva and his wife Shakti. Tr.

36. I *Corinthians*, Ch. III, Verses 16, 17.

37. आसुप्तेरामृतेः कालं नयेत् वेदान्तचिन्तया ।
दद्यान्नावसरं कञ्चित् कामादीनां मनागपि ॥
Panchadashi.

The Vedanta deals with questions like 'What am I?' 'What is this phenomenal world?' 'How is it related to me?' 'What is the nature of the *Paramatma*?' Lust cannot approach a mind absorbed in the consideration of such abstruse questions.

The requirements of the flesh are a great drawback to deep study and meditation. Those, therefore, that love the latter, abhor the former. Socrates was asked before his death, 'How was it he was not afraid of death?' "Because," he replied, "death will be a relief to me as it will sever the soul from the flesh which has so long disturbed me in my meditations." Those that are wise will always try to keep the flesh as far away from the soul as is possible. The weaknesses of the flesh always divert the mind from serious reflections. So you must entirely forget the body before you can engage in the contemplation of any great subject. The gentleman about whom I have just spoken to you, used to give lessons in Botany to one of our Lieutenant-Governors who used to come to his place for the purpose. It not infrequently happened that the Lieutenant-Governor was announced, and yet his tutor was not at all mindful of his presence, so deeply he sat immersed in his studies. It was not till somebody came and actually shook him that he was apprised of the Governor's arrival. How can lust conquer such a soul? All of us are well aware that Sir Isaac Newton was free from the influence of this vice.

(ix) Think of your mother. To the son there can be nothing so sweet and so pure as his mother. The very name of that being whom we revere and love so dearly, raises holy thoughts in the mind, and

drives away all that is impure. It is for this reason that no epithet that you can adopt in addressing God will so much move your sentiments as the epithet of "Mother." The idea that God is your mother always keeps the heart cheerful, and acts as a safeguard against temptation. Realise the motherhood of God in the universe, and everything around you will reflect the purity of Her countenance. You look at a woman—can any ungodly emotion find a place in your heart, if her face reminds you of your mother's ? Paramahansa Ramakrishna had no physical connexion with his wife. He himself related the story how his wife once expressed a desire to pass a night with him, and the Paramahansa agreed. When she came and began to stroke his feet, he addressed his Divine Mother thus : 'Here thou art, my Mother, come to me in the guise of a wife! Come, come, why should I fear Thee ? ' The night wore off, and nothing unwelcome crossed his mind for a moment.

(x) Many have profited by recalling to mind the ugliness of the human frame. Luxury can have little attraction for you when you realise the loathsomeness of the body :

> "Full of impurities and of worms, giving out a bad smell by nature, the seat of urine and of night-soil—it is only fools who delight in the pleasures of this body, from which the wise will ever refrain."[38]

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38. अमेध्यपूर्णे कृमिजालसंकुले
स्वभावदुर्गन्धिनिनिन्दितान्तरे ।
कलेवरे मूत्रपुरीषभाविते
रमन्ति मूढा विरमन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

Yogopanishad.

Look at the refuse that is constantly coming out of the nine openings[39]—how loathsome the sight! Add to this how frail and transitory is the human frame, and how stiff and ugly it becomes after death! Says Ramachandra in the *Yogavasishtha:*[40]

> "Take the constituents of a woman's body piecemeal—the integuments, the flesh-fibres, the blood, the gaseous emanations and the liquids, and see if you find it still charming. Else, why should you vainly delude yourself?"

In another place again:

> "Woman's venomous beauty soon resolves itself, O Sire, into blood, flesh, and a few bones."[41]

Says Shukadeva in the *Yogopanishad:*[42]

> "What is this body full of sores, stinking and coated with skin, filled with hundreds of worms and with urinous and foecal matter, undergoing various transformations, the abode of all voluptuous enjoyments that bring on certain destruc-

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39. The nine openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower ones. Tr.

40. त्वङ्मांसरक्तवास्पाम्बु पृथक् कृत्वा विलोचनम् ।
समालोकय रम्यं चेत् किं मुधा परिमुह्यसि ।।
Yogavasishtha, Vairagya Prakarana, Ch. XXI, Sloka 2.

41. इतो मांसमितो रक्तमितोऽस्थीनीति वासरैः ।
ब्रह्मन् कतिपयैरेव याति स्त्रीविषचारुता ।।
Yogavasishtha, Vairagya Prakarana, Ch. XXI, Sloka 25.

42. व्रणमुखमिव देहं पूतिचर्मावनद्धं
कृमिकुलशतपूर्णं मूत्रविष्ठानुलेपम् ।
विगतबहुलरूपं सर्वभोगादिवासं
ध्रुवमरणनिमित्तं किन्तु मोहप्रसक्त्या ।।
इदमेव क्षयद्वारं न पश्यसि कदाचन
क्षीयन्ते यत्र सर्वाणि यौवनानि धनानि च ।।

tion by causing infatuation ? Do you not perceive that it is only a waste-pipe through which ebb away youth and wealth ? "

Shilhana Misra at the sight of the skull of a beautiful woman, moralises thus:

" 'Where is that beautiful face now which was lovely as the lily, where are those honeyed lips, where the sidelong glances of those large eyes, where that soft voice and where those eyebrows captivating as the bow of the god of Love ? '—so says the wind, whistling through the hollow of the mouth of a dead woman lying in a corner of a broken stretcher in a cremation ground, mocking, as it were, at those who are blind with lust."[43]

Think of this end, and all lust after sensual pleasures will disappear.

Shortly before Shakya Sinha's renunciation, some handsome women were introduced into his private apartments in order to seduce him to the pleasures of the world. One night when these women were asleep, the Prince began to observe them, and found them lying in all sorts of hideous postures, some with their necks wry, some with mouths drivelling at the corner, some with clattering teeth, and some breaking into unnatural fits of laughter in dream. 'What is all this,' said the Prince to himself, 'but a mortuary, and am I to amuse myself with things like these ?'

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43. क्वैतद्वक्त्रारविन्दं क्व तदधरमधु क्वायतास्ते कटाक्षाः
क्वालापाः कोमलास्ते क्वच मदनधनुर्भङ्गुरो भ्रूविलासः।
इत्थं खट्वाङ्गकोटौ प्रकटितदशनं मञ्जुगुञ्जत् समीरं
रागान्धानामिवोच्चैरुपहसति महामोहजालं कपालम् ॥

Shantishataka, Sloka 29.

His heart soared up to the Source of that beauty which never perishes.

(xi) The best and the noblest preventive to lust is Love. When the mind is drawn to some evil object, place some counter-attraction before it, and if the attraction is strong enough, the danger will be averted. He that is fond of pleasure, must seek for it, and unless you can place before him something high and ennobling that will captivate his heart, it is sure to cling to ignoble ends. Give a man a taste of God's love, and the baser passions will soon die in his heart as he grows in that love and learns to value it. He that has learnt to yearn after the Eternal Source of all joy, what allurements have the pleasures of the flesh for him? Earthly wine brings on nervous prostration, the liquor of God's love brings beatific exhilaration—joy that is ever fresh and knows no end. Earthly wine saps the physique, while the liquor of God's love imparts a divine glow to the countenance. Earthly drink brings on remorse, from divine drink comes the placid joy of self-complacence. Lust makes a beast of the man, love makes an angel of the beast. Lust of the flesh ends in sighs and regrets, love of God brings tidings of ever-new joy to the soul:

> "To sing the praise of God—it is charming, ever new, a perennial source of exceeding delight to the mind: it drieth up even an ocean of grief."[44]

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44. तदेव रम्यं रुचिरं नवं नवं
तदेव शश्वन्मनसो महोत्सवम् ।
तदेव शोकार्णवशोषणं नृणां
यदुत्तमःश्लोक यशोऽनुगीयते ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XII, Ch. XII, Sloka 50.

He that has once had a taste of His love, how can he turn to the vile pleasures of lust ? For him lust has no attraction.

The well-known Grecian anecdote of Jason and Ulysses affords a beautiful illustration upon this point. There was an island in the Mediterranean Sea, where lived three siren sisters who attracted people to the island by their song, and then wrought their ruin. Ulysses, the great Greek hero, was about to pass this island on one of his voyages, and when he came near to it, he tightly fastened himself to the mast of the ship, and sealed the ears of his crew with wax so that the sirens' song might not reach their ears. When at length the hour of trial came, directly the sweet strains of the sirens' music fell on his ears, he was seized with a violent desire to listen to it and struggled hard to reach the island, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the ropes he tied around himself could protect him. But Jason, when he fitted out his great Argonautic Expedition, thought of this danger, and provided against it in quite a different way. There was the great musician Orpheus. The wonderful power of Orpheus' voice could melt even stones. Jason took Orpheus with him, and when he neared the sirens' island, he asked Orpheus to sing. Orpheus sang. The crew of the ship remained spellbound, and the voice of the sirens fell flat upon their ears, and they rowed triumphantly past the island to the tunes of Orpheus' music. Rely not upon thy own strength only, for terrible will be thy sufferings then like Ulysses' :

"How can one that obstinately relies upon his

unaided strength, control his passions ? He alone can truly control them who rejoices in God." [45]

Lust will never come to him who has learnt to delight in God's love and to enjoy the company of His devotees. Hafiz[46] sank deep in that love, and who could think of seducing him to the vile pleasures of the flesh ? The blandishments of sin have no charms for him that has lost himself in Divine love. Can the mirage tempt him that is already drinking deep of the purest nectar ?

There are some who will sit like owls when saying their prayers, as if in fear of an imminent sentence of death. What can be a greater delusion than this ? For, who is so ever-joyful as He ? He is the fountain of all joy. And what happiness is there on earth, comparable to that of His companionship ? Once you have a taste of that joy, you are bound to sing with the Bengali Poet :

> " Can the mind be content with the pleasures of this earth ? I am thirstful of the nectar that flows out of Thy feet, and have no mind for riches or honour. Does the bee leave honey and take to water ? " [47]

The drunkard or the libertine, if he has but a moment's taste of this joy, is sure to give up his vicious habits. No one knew this better than Paramahamsa Rama-

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45. क्व निरोधो विमूढस्य यो निर्बन्धं करोति वै ।
स्वारामस्यैव धीरस्य सर्वदासावकृत्रिमः ।।

Ashtavakrasamhita.

46. One of the greatest poets of Persia, was a devotee of a very high order. Died 1388 A.D. Tr.

47. *Brahmasangeeta* or the Hymn-book of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, 7th Edition, P. 243. Tr.

krishna. For, if any one given to drink used to frequent his company, and if any body complained to him of the character of this new visitor, the great sage invariably met him with the answer, ' O, let him alone. How long can he go on like this ? ' He knew that the inebriating influence of the liquor he had begun to offer to the man's lips was bound to prove too much for his vicious proclivities.

When Narada[48] on his mother's death renounced the world and retired to the forests in search of God, he one day came to the foot of a great fig tree, and there sat down to contemplation. A long time did he sit thus when, lo, there suddenly flashed out before him the Divine refulgence in all its glory, but vanished in a moment. And then said the Lord to Narada :

> " Thou art not fit to see me in this birth. I am not visible to those novices in asceticism who have not yet mastered their passions." [49]

And, then again :

> " Yet have I once shown my beauty to thee only to create in thy mind a longing for me. For, the good soul that longeth for me gradually giveth up all other desires." [50]

What, really, is there on earth that you want, when you are drawn to His love ? How charming is the spot which is hallowed by the rays of the beauty of

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48. See p. 33, Foot-note 19, *ante*. Tr.

49. हन्तास्मिन् जन्मनि भवान्न मां द्रष्टुमिहार्हति ।
अविपक्वकषायाणां दुर्दर्शोऽहं कुयोगिनाम् ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha I, Ch. VI, Sloka 22.

50. सकृद्यद्दर्शितं रूपमेतत् कामाय तेऽनघ ।
मत्कामः शनकैः साधुः सर्वान्मुञ्चति हृच्छयान् ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha I, Ch. VI, Sloka 23.

that Eternal Ravisher of all hearts! The devotee forsakes all and goes mad in His love. Let all our desires go forth towards that perennial Source of all beauty, and let them not lead us to the haunts of the Demon Lust.

Now, the above are only some of the special remedies that could be suggested for conquering lust. While adopting any of the above, you must not lose sight of those remedies which are of more general application for the prevention of all vice, but which are none the less efficacious on that account.

Remember the ten vices that arise out of lust, and always be on your guard to keep out of their influence.

A spirit of emulation between two friends for the mastery of a vicious habit to which both are equally prone, often proves a great help in the struggle for purity. If they were to start like this, for instance,—'Let us see which of us can longer keep out evil thought'—I am sure this would stimulate their energies and render them better able to master the vice, than if they were to proceed to work alone, each in his own way.

Much good often comes out of an attempt to mend others. For, this lays open the sores of your own heart, and a feeling comes upon you that you must heal yourself before you try to heal others. Besides, as you discuss the evil effect of a particular sin, you learn to hate it more and more. But you must at the same time guard yourself against the obvious dangers of such a course. I know of a young man who has wrecked himself on this shoal. He applied himself to the work of rescuing fallen women, but soon lost

himself in the course of his efforts. One must therefore be possessed of a strong mental calibre himself, before he launches on the hazardous enterprise of rescuing sinners. And yet, there can hardly be any danger in mixing with those that are known to be lesser sinners than ourselves or are our equals in that respect, and in assisting one another in the attainment of purity.

There are some who seem to think that continence is incompatible with the life of a householder, as if incontinence is the one thing necessary to make an ideal household! Oh, what a pity that this most unwholesome prejudice should prevail in a country where the formulators of the *Grihasthasrama*[51] were none but those Rishis of old who had thoroughly mastered their passions? What can be more deplorable than this! 'Master your passions first, and then come to marry,' this was clearly the teaching of the Hindu sages. The *Brahmacharyasrama* precedes the *Grihasthasrama* in order. *Brahmacharya* begins just as childhood ends, and when by *Brahmacharya* your character becomes pure, it is then and not till then that you are allowed to go in for a married life:

> "Thus a Brahmin, having adopted this noble vow of a *Brahmachari* and having by severe discipline burnt down all desires, will shine forth like fire. He shall then, if he desires to adopt any other course of life, present himself for an examination upon the Vedas, and having passed it, offer a present to his preceptor and perform ablutions

51. The four *Asramas* or stages of life are mentioned in the *Manusamhita* viz., the *Brahmacharya* or a life of continence i.e., the student life; the *Garhasthya* or the house-holder's life; *Vanaprastha* or a life of retirement; *Sannyasa* or a life of asceticism. Tr.

according to his injunctions. And then this most excellent of Brahmins shall take to a married life or to the life of an anchorite wandering just as he pleases. The heart of such a man will never turn away from Me. If he marries, he must wed one that is like him in all respects, and of whom none speaks ill." [52]

Household enjoyment is to come only after you have been thoroughly taught to master all desires—this is the ideal of a married life, not the satisfaction of animal passions. We realise what is meant by the life of a true householder when we read the following account of what the father of Savitri did:

"For the procreation of a child, he adopted stringent rules of life, practised continence, and became abstemious and regular in his meals, and controlled his passions."[53]

This indeed is true *Grihasthasrama*. Think of the responsibilities of procreation, and what consequences would follow if they were to be taken up with a light heart. There is hardly any difference between a beast and a man who has no control over his passions.

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52. एवं बृहद्व्रतधरो ब्राह्मणोऽग्निरिव ज्वलन् ।
मद्भक्तस्तीव्रतपसा दग्धकर्माशयोऽमलः ॥
अथानन्तरमावेक्षन् यथा जिज्ञासितागमः ।
गुरवे दक्षिणां दत्वा स्नायाद्गुर्वनुमोदितः ॥
गृहं वनं वोपविशेत् प्रव्रजेद्वा द्विजोत्तमः ।
आश्रमादाश्रमं गच्छेन्नान्यथा मत्परश्चरेत् ॥
गृहार्थी सदृशीं भार्यामुद्वहेद जुगुप्सिताम् ।

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. XVII, Slokas 36-39.

53. अपत्योत्पादनार्थञ्च तीव्रं नियममास्थितः ।
कालं नियमिताहारो ब्रह्मचारी जितेन्द्रियः ॥

Mahabharata, Vanaparva, Ch. CCXCII, Sloka 8.

Let us always try to overcome the passion of lust, and let us entreat our friends to do the like, and we shall then all be able to conquer lust and go forward, hand in hand, in the path of virtue, and be blessed with *bhakti*.

II. ANGER

(i) Discuss the evil effects of anger, and the good that comes out of a mastery over this passion, and resolve never to yield to its influence. Think how not only individuals but nations also have often brought ruin upon themselves by yielding to this passion. Yudhishthira says to Draupadi in the *Mahabharata*:

> "Anger is the cause of man's ruin here upon earth. Under its influence man commits sins, kills even his elders, abuses whatever is good and deserves respect, cannot discriminate between proper and improper language. There is nothing which he cannot do and nothing which he cannot say. He would kill those that do not merit death, and honour those that deserve it. Anger leads man even to commit suicide. Blinded by anger man does not see an action in its true light, and is lost to all sense of duty and propriety."[54]

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54. क्रोधमूलो विनाशो हि प्रजानामिह दृश्यते ।
क्रुद्धः पापं नरः कुर्यात् क्रुद्धो हन्याद् गुरूनपि ।
क्रुद्धः परुषया वाचा श्रेयसोऽप्यवमन्यते ॥
वाच्यावाच्ये हि कुपितो न प्रजानाति कर्हिचित् ।
नाकार्यमस्ति क्रुद्धस्य नावाच्यं विद्यते तथा ॥
हिंस्यात् क्रोधादवध्यांस्तु वध्यान् सम्पूजयेत च ।
आत्मानमपि च क्रुद्धः प्रेरयेद् यमसादनम् ॥
क्रुद्धो हि कार्यं सुश्रोणि न यथावत् प्रपश्यति ।
न कार्यं न च मर्यादां नरः क्रुद्धोऽनुपश्यति ॥

Vanaparva, Ch. XXIX, Slokas 3-6, 18.

Anger is one of the worst enemies of man, for it destroys all that is manly in him. It is anger which is mainly responsible for the horrid barbarities which have turned this earth into a hell. Under the influence of anger, the loveliest faces will present a repulsive sight—eyes swollen and reddened, lips trembling, nostrils distended, respiration quickened,—a hellish hue overspreading the countenance and a demoniac air pervading every changing expresson of the face. You would shun an angry man's presence, even if he were the dearest object of your heart. There is nothing that can so quickly spoil the beauty of a face, as anger.

Anger sometimes brings on terrible diseases in the human body. Physicians both Indian and foreign have observed that epilepsy, insanity, hysteria, haemorrhage, are often the outcome of anger. Not long ago, an incident was reported from a village in this district : Two women were vehemently quarrelling. One of them ran after the other with a cudgel. The latter went inside her hut, and shut the door. The pursuer came and knocked again and again at the closed door, and suddenly dropped down dead. What a terrible end ! A European doctor says that a study of the reports of Lunatic Asylums convinces us that anger is one of the potent causes of insanity. Most of us that have experienced fits of violent anger must have observed that loss of appetite often follows such fits. They abnormally quicken the circulation of the blood, violently affect the brain centres, and disturb the digestive functions.

Let us next see how anger acts upon the heart it wounds :

" A tree pierced with arrows or felled by an axe

would much sooner put forth its buds again than the heart of a man who has been wounded with rude words."[55]

A strong mind is never overpowered by anger. It is a sign of inherent weakness :

> "Anger never arises in the mind of one whom the wise and far-sighted regard as a strong *soul*."[55a]

Consider the evil effects of anger, and think how noble would be the achievement of a victory over this passion. Resolve 'I will never yield to this passion', and repeat the resolution to yourself. I am sure you will then never forget to act up to it whenever occasion arises.

Carefully avoid occasions for anger and keep away from whatever tends to excite that passion, whether it be a particular person or a particular thing. Do not approach the person or the thing till the feeling has entirely subsided and you have calmed down.

(ii) Begin with an endeavour to make your anger as short-lived as possible. It will then gradually disappear. The following anecdote illustrates the effect of the beautiful saying in the Bible, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."[56] Two Englishmen had a quarrel and they parted in a fierce mood. Some hours

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55. रोहते सायकैर्विद्धं वनं परशुना हतम् ।
वाचा दुरुक्तया विद्धं न संरोहति वाक्क्षतम् ॥
Mahabharata, Udyogaparva, Ch. XXXIV, Sloka 78.

55a. तेजस्वीति यमाहुर्वै पण्डिता दीर्घदर्शिनः ।
नक्रोधोऽभ्यन्तरस्तस्य भवतीति विनिश्चितम् ।
Mahabharata, Vanaparva, Ch. XXIX, Slokas 16, 17.

56. *Ephesians*, Ch. IV, Verse 26.

after, when it was about dusk and the sun was going down, one of them came and knocked at the door of the other. Directly the latter opened, the former clasped his hands and cried out " O friend, the sun is about to go down. How long shall we continue thus ? " There was immediately a shaking of hands, and mutual exchange of good wishes. Jesus Christ said : " If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. " [57] I will just relate another incident showing how this precept worked upon a certain young man :

There were two young friends living in some town, one of whom was a school-boy, and the other a college student. For some reason the two boys once fell out. The next day the Head Master came to know of it and he told the school-boy to ask pardon of his friend. Upon this the boy said, " I have done nothing wrong, but if I have, I ask his pardon." So saying he began to weep, for his pride was wounded. Now, this boy used to come and see the other boy almost every day but gave up doing so from the day they fell out. The latter therefore began to miss him very much and whenever he sat down to prayer that great saying of Jesus troubled his heart and it seemed to him God would not accept his prayers so long as he had not settled the quarrel with his friend. For, thought he, God is all Love, and no one could approach Him who cherished any ill-feeling against a fellow-being. This young man therefore went to his friend and asked him

57. Matthew, Ch. V, Verses 23, 24.

to make up matters. To this he received the curt reply that glass could not be joined if once broken. After this, there was a meeting in the school, in which both the boys were present. The school-boy there gave out that he was not at all sorry for all that he had done towards his friend. This offended the Head Master who was then present, and he was thinking of punishing the boy for what he said. But he refrained from doing so at the request of the college student who then came to the boy and begged hard for reconciliation. He related to his friend the glories of love and repeatedly begged his pardon for what he may have done. Love at length asserted its sway, and the boy's heart was touched. He at once ran up to his aggrieved friend and grasped his hands in great emotion and craved his pardon. It was, indeed, a heavenly sight.

(iii) One preventive would be to admit your weakness after the anger has subsided and to ask pardon of the man who is the object of your wrath even if it were the meanest of your domestics. Go on doing this and it will bring on a feeling of self-reproach which will prevent a recurrence of your angry fits.

(iv) Put down upon a piece of paper some word that will remind you of your weakness in this respect, and hang it up on the walls of your room. I have heard of an eminent lawyer in one of the districts of Bengal, who was rather a little too much given to fits of temper. Once he flew into a rage against an old Brahmin and used improper language. He repented, and in order to guard himself for the future, he took up several slips of paper and wrote down upon them in prominent letters, the word "Again!" and put

them up on the walls of his room. Every time after this, whenever he was about to fall into a fit of anger, his eyes fell upon the writing on the wall, and his head hung down in shame and the passion left him immediately.

When an angry fit has come upon you, if there is some one nearby who gently reminds you of your weakness and its impropriety, the anger will slowly calm down. But this friendly help should be given with great tact. For, the slighest rudeness or indiscretion at such a time may, instead of alleviating, aggravate the evil.

The holding up of a mirror before a face discoloured by anger may sometimes help to check it. The angry man will surely be ashamed of the repulsive appearance he presents.

(v) Keep silent at the time of anger. Plato used to sit quiet at the time of excitement, and never punished a delinquent till the fit was over. He was once silently sitting in his room in the midst of such a fit, when a friend came and asked him what he was doing. "I am chastising an angry man," was the reply. If you punish a man under excitement you are likely to exceed due limits, and it is therefore proper that you should wait till the fit is over, and you can then expect to be more just towards him.

During a fit of anger remove yourself from the place where you are, and this will help you in putting down the angry fit.

There is a wholesome advice which is often inculcated by our women, viz., count one hundred before you vent your anger. The time that will be taken up

by the counting may calm down the feeling and thus save you from the exhibition of a nasty temper. Taking God's name loudly at such a time will serve the same purpose by diverting your mind from the object of anger.

(vi) Learn to disregard insults and calumnies. If a man has offered you an insult, how does that affect you ?

> "The insulted man goes to bed and gets up with an easy mind. He goes about with quite a happy soul, while it is the man who offers the insult that comes to ruin."[58]

'The wrong-doer must suffer sooner or later. Why should I do wrong because some one has done something that is not right ? Let me do with an unruffled mind what I ought to do.' Think in this line, and the mind will cool down and wrath will disappear.

(vii) Anger gives way in proportion as lust, greed, pride and the spirit of fault-finding diminish. It is often the outcome of wounded vanity or of unsatisfied lust or greed, and is also often brought on by a discussion of others' faults. Says Bhishmadeva to Yudhishthira:

> "Wrath arises from greed and is inflamed by hearing others' faults discussed. By forgiveness alone can you stay or check it."[59]

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58. सुखं ह्यवमतः शेते सुखञ्च प्रतिबुध्यते ।
सुखं चरति लोकेऽस्मिन्नवमन्ता विनश्यति ॥
Manusamhita, Ch. II, Sloka 163.

59. लोभात् क्रोधः प्रभवति परदोषैरुदीर्यते ।
क्षमया तिष्ठते राजन् क्षमया विनिवर्तते ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CLXIII, Slokas 7, 8.

Anger diminishes in proportion as you can successfully cultivate a kind, forgiving and peace-loving spirit and as you grow in the knowledge of the Divine truth. Always dwell on the brighter side of human nature, and you will never feel inclined to be angry with any one :

> " Out of anger and greed arises jealousy, which also sometimes springs out of some ungainly sight and is checked by a spirit of charity towards all created things and also by a culture of Divine knowledge. "[60]

Truth must triumph and evil must perish. Always remember this and you will succeed in keeping out jealousy :

> " Jealousy arises out of an inability to retaliate an evil turn done by a powerful enemy, and is put down by a spirit of charity alone. "[61]

You must not imagine from what has been said above that by asking you to be kind and charitable, I want you not to protest against vice and ungodliness. Protest of this kind, even if unsuccessful, has its use. Raise your voice against the slightest corruption you see by your side, and do the utmost you can to remove it. Move heaven and earth to drive away all untruth, iniquity and godlessness, but never lose the balance

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60. परासूया क्रोधलोभावन्तरा प्रतिमुच्यते ।
दयया सर्वभूतानां निर्देशाद्विनिवर्तते ।
अवद्यदर्शनादेति तत्त्वज्ञानाच्च धीमताम् ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CLXIII, Sloka 9.

61. प्रतिकर्त्तुं न शक्ता ये बलस्थायापकारिणे ।
असूया जायते तीव्रा कारुण्याद्विनिवर्तते ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CLXIII, Sloka 19.

of your mind. Go to war against sin but in a cool and composed spirit—in the spirit in which the great Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight in the fields of Kurukshetra. Let not the slightest vestige of wrath prompt your action, but a sense of duty, an earnest endeavour to uphold the cause of truth and vindicate the law of God. He who does not combat sin is a creature of the Enemy of man, and not of his Divine Victor. Said Joseph Mazzini : " Whenever you see corruption by your side and do not strive against it, yon betray your duty." He that standeth not against sin is a traitor to God. This is what Kashyapa says to Prahlada in the *Mahabharata :* [62]

> " Virtue hit by the arrow of vice, comes to society for redress. If society withholds its assistance, half the vice attaches to its leader, one fourth goes to those that do not decry it and a fourth only sticks to the sinner. Not till the sinner is punished does the sin descend from the shoulders of the community to those of the sinner. "

How heavy, then, are our responsibilities !

(viii) Some physical rules should be observed for the suppression of anger. Give up such food as tends to excite the passion. Always try to keep your body cool. Wash your feet and legs up to the knee-

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62. विद्धो धर्मो ह्यधर्मेण सभां यत्रोपपद्यते ।
न चास्य शल्यं कृन्तन्ति विद्वांसस्तु सभासदः ॥
अर्द्धं हरति वै श्रेष्ठः पादो भवति कर्तृषु ।
पादश्चैव सभासत्सु ये न निन्दन्ति निन्दितम् ॥
अनेनाभवति श्रेष्ठो मुच्यन्ते च सभासदः ।
एनो गच्छति कर्तारं निन्दार्हो यत्र निन्द्यते ॥
Sabhaparva, Ch. LXVIII, Slokas 77-79.

joints and your arms up to the elbows and also the nape of your neck as our Mahomedan brethren do when preparing for prayers, evidently with a view to composing the mind.

Always guard yourself against the eight vices that arise out of wrath, of which I have already spoken. There are some who say, 'How can one get on in the world without anger which is often so useful?' I say to them, 'Am I to suppose that you are ignorant of how kind treatment often proves more useful than a harsh bearing?' Any school-master will bear testimony to the fact that kind words will more effectively check aberrations than corporeal punishment. When a man is about to strike you in a fit of anger, meet him with a smiling face and his temper will at once vanish:

> "Mildness of temper conquers a hard heart as much as a soft one. Nothing is impossible for mildness to attain. A mild temperament is therefore more efficacious than a harsh one."[63]

In cases, however, where you find that mildness does not avail, you may make an exhibition of anger without feeling it, just as sages do:

> "The mind of a sage, even when angered, is never perturbed. Can a man heat the waters of the sea with a lighted straw?"[64]

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63. मृदूना दारुणं हन्ति मृदुना हन्त्यदारुणम् ।
नासाध्यं मृदुना किञ्चित्तस्मात्तीव्रतरं मृदु ॥

Mahabharata, Vanaparva, Ch. XXVIII, Sloka 31.

64. साधोः प्रकोपितस्यापि मनो नायाति विक्रियाम् ।
नहि तापयितुं शक्यं सागराम्भस्तृणोल्कया ॥

Hitopadesa, Mitralabha, Sloka 87.

The sage Narada was once on his way to heaven with his favourite lyre in hand. He met a snake, and the snake asked him, " Great sage, what shall I do to be saved ?" " Do not bite any one," replied Narada. The snake followed the advice, and began to lead a harmless life. Shepherd boys somehow came to know of the snake's resolve, and began to pelt him with stones. Terrible was his suffering and yet he bore it all quietly. Even frogs mocked and jeered at him. Some time after, it so happened that Narada was again passing that way and he asked the snake how he was faring. " Ah me," replies the snake, " I am undone. Look at me and see how the boys have behaved with me since I ceased biting. They have taken my life out of me. Even frogs have not spared me. How can I live like this ?" " Why, " says Narada, " What was it that I asked you to do ? I never advised you not to hiss. I only wanted you not to bite—that was all that you had to do." With this the sage left and the boys came with sticks and stones again, and the snake raised his hood and hissed at them. This was enough to set the urchins flying, and they never again came back to him. There may, indeed, be need in this world for hissing, but there can never be any necessity for biting.

III. GREED

(i) ' What are the objects of my greed ? How long is the pleasure likely to last ? What will it avail in the end ? '—Reflections like these, by helping us to realise the utter hollowness of all wordly enjoyments,

will tend to check our greed. Bhishma says to Yudhishthira in the *Mahabharata :*

> " Greed owes its origin to ignorance. It subsides as soon as you realise the transitory nature of the pleasures it seeks. " [65]

Not to speak of sensual enjoyments, even honour and fame,—what are they and how long do they last ? Buddhadeva says to Chhandaka :

> " Verily, all these objects of enjoyment, O Chhandaka, are transitory, fleeting, inconstant and naturally changing ; passing away with the rapidity of a mountain-torrent ; evanescent as dew-drops ; sorrowful ; hollow as an empty fist ; weak as the trunk of a plantain tree ; painful like unwholesome food ; like the autumn cloud, dissipating as soon as formed ; transient as the lightning in the sky ; producing ultimate mischief like poisonous food ; painproducing as the *Maruta* creeper ; worthless as the scribbling of infants ; comparable to bubbles in water ; quickly changing ; like the illusion of the mirage arising from a perversion of the senses and of the mind ; comparable to dreams which please a perverted vision ; full of troubles like the sea ; exciting thirst like saline water ; dangerous to touch like the head of a serpent ; shunned by the wise like a precipice and as being fruitful of dangers, quarrels, pride and other vices ; known as such,

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65. अज्ञानप्रभवो लोभो भूतानां दृश्यते सदा।
अस्थिरत्वञ्च भोगानां दृष्ट्वा ज्ञात्वा निवर्तते॥

Shantiparva, Ch. CLXIII, Sloka 20.

they are avoided by the wise, condemned by the learned, derided by the respectable, shunned by the sensible, welcomed by the senseless, and indulged in by the ignorant."[66]

Again,

" They are to be avoided by the wise like the heads of snakes ; they are loathsome like the unclean urine-pot ; they destroy all happiness ; knowing them to be so, I have no inclination for them. "[67]

Should we yearn after these detestable things which only bring on a man's ruin ? And how long does the pleasure of enjoyment last ? Says the great Sanskrit Poet Bharavi :

" The pleasures of to-day become a thing of the past to-morrow and live in memory only. Therefore knowing them to be as dreams, never indulge in them."[68]

What is more, they bring sorrow in their train. Says the same poet :

" They raise hopes but deceive you in the end ; they give you pleasure for a time but injure you in the long run ; it is very difficult to get rid of them even when you think they are leaving you ; our sensual desires are our bitter enemies."[69]

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66. *Lalitavistara*, Ch. XV.
67. *Ibid.*
68. श्वस्त्वया सुखसंवित्तिः स्मरणीयाधुनातनी ।
इति स्वप्नोपमान् मत्वा कामान्मागास्तदङ्गताम् ॥
Kiratarjuniya.
69. श्रद्धेया विप्रलब्धारः प्रिया विप्रियकारिणः ।
सुदुस्तज्यास्त्यजन्तोऽपि कामाः कष्टा हि शत्रवः ॥
Kiratarjuniya.

As the Bengali proverb has it, "From greed cometh sin ; from sin, death."

> "Greed begets wrath, lust, illusion, and eventually ruin. It is the source of all sin."[70]

If your desires are impeded in their course, you are sure to fly into a passion. They utterly blind the eye of reason and blunt the conscience. Greed of riches and desire for fame often lead men into unrighteous ways :

> "Greed destroys reason and thus does away with the sense of decency ; and the result is that there is an end of all virtue and, with it, of all that is good in man."[71]

Again,

> "Greed perturbs reason, creates a worldly hankering which brings on misery both here and hereafter."[72]

Some justification might indeed be found for the gratification of desires, were they content with the objects sought. We experience quite the contrary in life—gratification only adds fuel to the fire, it serves

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70. लोभात् क्रोधः प्रभवति लोभात् कामः प्रजायते ।
लोभान्मोहश्च नाशश्च लोभः पापस्य कारणम् ॥

Hitopadesa.

71. लोभः प्रज्ञानमाहन्ति प्रज्ञा हन्ति हता ह्रियम् ।
ह्रीर्हता बाधते धर्मं धर्मो हन्ति हतःश्रियम् ॥

Mahabharata, Udyogaparva, Ch. LXXXI, Sloka 18.

72. लोभेन बुद्धिश्चलति लोभो जनयते तृषाम् ।
तृष्णार्त्तो दुःखमाप्नोति परत्रेह च मानवः ॥

Hitopadesa.

only to inflame the passions. Raja Yayati in his old age thought he would be better able to pacify his desires by gratifying than by controlling them, and in order to be better able to enjoy them, prayed for youth. One of his sons, Puru, gave him his youth and took upon himself the old age of his father. Yayati, thus re-juvenated, gave full reins to all desires and enjoyed them to his heart's content, not for a year or even a hundred years but for a full thousand years. And yet, what did he discover in the end? He found desires could never be satisfied. At the end of the thousandth year, therefore, he had his son Puru brought to him and addressed him thus :

> " With thy youth, my brave son, have I pursued worldly pleasures for as long as I could wish and with as much ardour and zest as I could desire. But desires are never pacified by enjoyment. They will rather burn with renewed vigour as fire does with clarified butter. All the paddy, barley, gold, animals and women that the earth contains will not satiate the desire of even one single individual. Shun, therefore, the longing for them. Happy is he who gives up this longing which is, as it were, a deadly disease, cannot be shaken off by ill-turned minds and does not become weak even with the infirmities of age. I have been addicted to worldly pleasures for a full thousand years and yet, day after day, my hunger for them is growing fast. Therefore, having given them up and with my soul fixed upon the great God, utterly regardless of all feelings of pleasure and of pain, I will rove about in the forests in company with the deer, regarding nothing as my own and

making no difference between pleasure and pain."[73]

Greed destroys all peace of mind. It is the worst form of mental disease. Pleasures give you peace only when you can enjoy them with a mind free from all desire :

"He attaineth peace into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean which is filled with water but remains unmoved—not he who desireth objects of pleasure."[74]

(ii) Divert your mind from the object that excites your desire. As Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :

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73. यथाकामं यथोत्साहं यथाकालमरिन्दम ।
सेविता विषयाः पुत्र यौवनेन मया तव ॥
न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्द्धते ॥
यः पृथिव्याम् व्रीहियवं हिरण्यं पशवः स्त्रियः ।
एकस्यापि न पर्याप्तं तस्मात्तृष्णां परित्यजेत् ॥
या दुस्त्यजा दुर्मतिभिर्या न जीर्यति जीर्यतः ।
योऽसौ प्राणान्तिको रोगस्तां तृष्णां त्यजतः सुखम् ॥
पूर्णं वर्षसहस्रं मे विषयासक्तचेतसः ।
तथाप्यनुदिनं तृष्णा ममैतेष्वभिजायते ॥
तस्मादेनामहं त्यक्त्वा ब्रह्मण्याधाय मानसं ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो निर्ममो भूत्वा चरिष्यामि मृगैः सह ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha IX, Ch. XIX.

74. आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Ch. II, Sloka 70.

> "Whenever the unsteady mind wanders away, rein it in and bring it under the control of the self."[75]

Check a desire the moment it springs up, do not follow the object it seeks, and you will soon conquer greed. Whenever you perceive a desire raising its head, a desire to eat some delicious food or to wear some fine clothing, make it a point not to satisfy it—resolve at least for some time not to touch the food or the apparel. And if you will always follow this rule, you will soon put down all desires and never be a slave to them. Whatever thing you own or whatever dress you wear, you own it or wear it because you have to move in society—let this be your attitude in relation to all earthly possessions. Vasishtha says to Ramachandra in the Yogavasishtha.[76]

> "By abstinence must the slightest evil desire be nipped in the bud, as one would destroy the sprout of a poison-tree."[77]

And again in another place :

> "Hook the fish of desire by abstinence."[78]

Keep thyself as far off from temptation as you can. If the object is one that has not come into your possession, do not seek to have it, and if it is one which

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75. यतो यतो निश्चलति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥
Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Ch. VI, Sloka 26.

76. Nirvanaprakarana, Ch, LXXVII, Sloka 81.

77. मनागभ्युदितैवेच्छा छेतव्यानर्थकारिणी ।
असंवेदनशस्त्रेण विषस्येवाङ्कुरावली ॥

78. प्रत्याहारबडिशेन इच्छामत्स्यीं नियच्छत ।
Nirvanaprakarana, Ch. LXXVII, Sloka 83.

is already in your possession, try to remove yourself as far from it as possible, the moment you feel you are under its influence.

There was a miser who had his treasures hidden under the ground. He used to look at them three or four times in the day and his heart leaped with joy at the sight. So enamoured was he of his vast wealth that, if he missed the pleasure a single day, he felt dreadfully uncomfortable. And you can well imagine what a number of foul means he had adopted for the acquisition of that wealth. He had once to be away from home on some business. His friends meanwhile removed all his treasures and the miser found on his return that not a single cowrie was left in the empty hole. Fancy the plight he was in. Friends then came and took away from him what articles he had and, last of all, even his clothing. He wept and wept till at length the spirit of renunciation came upon him and he began to think, 'What are all these treasures worth ? Will they avail me at the moment of death ? It will rather be painful to have to leave them behind. In this blind pursuit after riches, have I not lost the real thing that I want, the only thing that will avail me hereafter ? O, what will become of me ? ' So saying, he left all that he had. Then his friends offered him back what they had taken, but he refused to take them and turned an ascetic. The man was thus saved by his friends taking away from him all that he held dearest to his heart.

When I say you must keep yourself as far away from all temptations as is possible, I must not be understood to mean that you are to shun the world altogether. In discharging the duties that you have to

do, you may meet with riches, with honour and fame. Only, accept them in a spirit of resignation, not seeking them for their own sake and always praying to God that they may not fetter you in any way or may not puff you up when they come. With a mind absolutely indifferent to all objects of greed, go on doing your duties to yourself, to your family and to the world at large.

(iii) We have created some imaginary wants for ourselves, and have thus widened the scope of greed. Think for a while what are the things that you really require, things that you cannot do without, and you will wonder how few they are. Those delicacies that adorn your table every day, do you, my friend, really need them ? Look at the peasant there, does he eat food as rich as you do, and yet is he less strong in physique than yourself ? Take the soft bed that you use, white as cream, and the costly curtains you put up around it—do you, my good friend, really need either ? Yonder is the peasant who is passing his days with an infinitely greater peace of mind—is he not lying upon this hard ground beneath your feet and at the foot of that tree by the way-side and is not his sleep sounder and quieter than yours ? You can not sleep except in a two or three-storeyed building, but let me assure you, my brother, I have seen many, the latchet of whose shoes you are not worthy to unfasten, who are dwelling in small lowly straw huts which they have lit up with the halo of their presence, and in which they are living in comfort and happiness quite unknown to yourself. You will say you are used to these things and they have therefore come to be a necessity with you. Let me then remind you, you

slave to your habit, that you are not perhaps used to half of what Bhartrihari enjoyed. And yet listen to what he said :

> "Look how the beggar there, free from the thraldom of all desires, is lying quite like a king—the earth his magnificent bedstead, his arms his pillows, the sky his canopy, the moon his lamp, and self-renunciation his life-mate in whose company he enjoys felicity, while the four quarters of the globe fan him like true wives."[79]

With this, contrast your own condition for a moment—you are frantically rummaging the earth for objects of comfort, and feel miserable when you do not find them. The sages ask :

> "Who is there that will commit sins to fill the stomach when it can be satisfied by mere greens and vegetables that grow so exuberantly in nature ?"[80]

And yet your hunger is not appeased save by killing sheep, goats and such other animals. Can you not live on vegetables merely ? Certainly you can, but there they are, artificial evils called up into existence by your own imagination. Give up your love of luxury and live upon plain and healthy food and sleep upon

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79. भूःपर्यङ्को निजभुजलता कन्दुकः खं वितानं
दीपश्चन्द्रो विरतिवनितालब्धसङ्गप्रमोदः ।
दिक्कान्ताभिः पवनचमरैर्वीज्यमानः समन्ताद्
भिक्षुः शेते नृप इव भुवि त्यक्तसर्वस्पृहोऽपि ॥

Vairagyashataka, Sloka 85.

80. स्वच्छन्दवनजातेन शाकेनापि प्रपूर्यते ।
अस्य दग्धोदरस्यार्थे कः कुर्यात् पातकं महत् ॥

Hitopadesa.

a simple bed and dwell in a neat house, and you will see how easily you succeed in crushing the evil of greed. The barest necessities of life leave but little room for greed. Really,

> " Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long."[81]

Remember this and do not run after this and that, be content with the small gifts that you have :

> " How shall seekers after riches get that happiness which belongs only to those tranquil-minded men who have drunk to their fill the nectar of contentment ? "[82]

IV. INFATUATION

This is the root of all our vices. It springs out of ignorance and delusion. You consider that to be your own which is not really yours, and you run after things that are uncertain and transitory, deluding yourself all the while with the idea that they will last you for eternity and give you supreme felicity. 'Is this body mine ? Were it so, why can I not turn a single grey hair into black ?' 'Is this house mine ? Why, then, can I not live in it as long as I like ?' 'Not a particle of the dust that covers my yard can I claim as my own and yet am I constantly calling every thing my own. My father, my mother, my son, my wife, none of these belongs to me.' It is infatuation that makes me think they are mine :

81. From Goldsmith's *Hermit*. Tr.
82. सन्तोषामृततृप्तानां यत् सुखं शान्तचेतसाम् ।
कुतस्तद्धनलुब्धानामितश्चेतश्च धावताम् ॥
Hitopadesa.

"This is my father, this is my mother, this my wife and this my house—that which causes this feeling of 'mine', is infatuation."[83]

But for this infatuation, no one would have cared for the ephemeral objects of this earth. Jealousy and pride would have been unkown, lust itself could not have clouded our vision and painted the blackest of unholy things in the brightest of hues.

(i) Knowledge dispels all ignorance. When the sun rises, darkness vanishes of itself. Study and meditate, 'Who am I?' 'What is there I can call my own?' 'What binds me to this earth?' 'What is salvation?' Ponder deep over these questions. 'I am something beyond this bodily frame which is a mere illusion'—go on thinking on these lines, and you will get over infatuation. Vasishtha says to Ramachandra in the *Yogavasishtha*.[84]

"'*I* am lean, *I* am miserable, *I* am confined, *I* have hands and feet'—thoughts like these and conduct in accordance therewith tie us down. 'I am not miserable, I have no body, how can I be

83. मम पिता मम माता ममेयं गृहिणी गृहम् ।
एवंविधं ममत्वं यत् स मोह इति कीर्तितः ॥
Padmapurana.

84. कृशोऽतिदुःखी बद्धोऽहं हस्तपादादिमानहम् ।
इतिभावानुरूपेण व्यवहारेण बध्यते ॥
नाहं दुःखी न मे देहो बन्धः कस्मान्मयि स्थितः ।
इति भावानुरूपेण व्यवहारेण मुच्यते ॥
नाहं मांसं नचास्थीनि देहादन्यः परोह्यहम् ।
इति निश्चयवानन्तः क्षीणाविद्यो विमुच्यते ॥
कल्पितैवमविद्येयमनात्मन्यात्मभावनात् ।
पुरुषेणाप्रबुद्धेन न प्रबुद्धेन राघव ॥
Utpattiprakarana, Ch. XIII, Slokas 58-61.

confined ?'—thoughts like these and conduct in accordance therewith lead to salvation. 'I am not flesh nor bones, I am something other than the body '—whoever assures himself of this, rises above ignorance and is saved. He who is asleep, O Raghava, brings on infatuation by fancying non-self to be self ; the awakened will not do so."

Says Sankaracharya :

"Who is thy wife, and who thy son ? Passing strange is this world of ours. Whose art thou, and whence come ? These, my brother, are matters for reflection."[85]

In the train of such thoughts comes wisdom. Ignorance disappears, and is replaced by pure faith in God, the abode of supreme bliss. The great sage Vasishtha thus points out the process :[86]

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85. का तव कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।
कस्य त्वं वा कुत आयातस्तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिदं भ्रातः ॥
Mohamudgar.

86. इमां सप्तपदां ज्ञानभूमिमाकर्णयानघ ।
नानया ज्ञातया भूयो मोहपङ्के निमज्जति ॥
ज्ञानभूमिः शुभेच्छाख्या प्रथमा समुदाहृता ।
विचारणा द्वितीया स्यात्तृतीया तनुमानसा ॥
सत्तापत्तिश्चतुर्थी स्यात्ततोऽसंसक्तिनामिका ।
पदार्थभावनी षष्ठी सप्तमी तूर्यगा गतिः ॥
स्थितः किं मूढ एवास्मि प्रेक्ष्येऽहं शास्त्रसज्जनैः ।
वैराग्यपूर्वमिच्छेति शुभेच्छेत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥
शास्त्रसज्जनसम्पर्कैर्वैराग्याभ्यासपूर्वकं ।
सदाचारप्रवृत्ता या प्रोच्यते सा विचारणा ॥
विचारणा शुभेच्छाभ्यां इन्द्रियार्थेष्वरक्तता ।
यत्र सा तनुताभावात् प्रोच्यते तनुमानसा ॥
भूमिकात्रितयाभ्यासाच्चेत्येऽर्थे विरतेर्वशात् ।
सत्तात्मनि स्थिते शुद्धे सत्तापत्तिरुदाहृता ॥

"O sinless Rama, listen, there are seven stages of knowledge on the attainment of which none would sink into the mire of infatuation.

"The first stage is called 'good inclination'; the second, 'discrimination'; the third, 'attenuation of desires'; the fourth, 'perception of the Being'; the fifth, 'dispassionateness'; the sixth, 'meditation on the Real'; and the seventh, the 'stage transcendental.'

"'Why am I sitting stupid? Shaking off passion for the world, let me apply myself to the *Shastras* and the company of good men'—when a man begins to think like this, he is said to have 'Good Inclination.'

"Having habituated himself to an aversion to the world and by association with good men and by keeping the company of good men, when he adopts good conduct to the exclusion of what is bad, he is in the stage of 'Discrimination'.

"Indifference to sensual enjoyments caused

दशा चतुष्टयाभ्यासादसंसर्गफलाय यः ।
रूढ़सत्वचमत्कारः प्रोक्ता संसक्तिनामिका ॥
भूमिका पञ्चकाभ्यासात् स्वात्मारामतया भृशं ।
अभ्यन्तराणां बाह्यानां पदार्थानामभावनात् ॥
परं प्रयुक्तेन चिरं प्रयत्नेन विबोधनं ।
पदार्थभावना नाम षष्ठी संजायते गतिः ॥
भूमिषट्कचिराभ्यासाद्भेदस्यानुपलम्भतः ।
यत् स्वाभाविकनिष्ठत्वं सा ज्ञेया तुर्यगा गतिः ॥
य हि राम महाभागाः सप्तमीभूमिमागताः ।
आत्मारामा महात्मानस्ते महत् पदमागताः ॥

Yogavasishtha, Utpattiprakarana, Ch. CXVIII.

by good inclination and discrimination is called ‘ Attenuation of desires ’.

“ When by the exercise of the first three processes the mind, not resting on anything worldly because of sensual enjoyments, rests in the Holy Soul, it is said to attain ‘ Perception of the Being ’.

“ By the exercise of the first four processes, when the mind realises wonderful tranquillity which results in utter want of attachment to the world, it attains the stage of ‘ Dispassionateness ’.

“ By the practice of the first five, when the mind feeling joy within itself, there being no care about any thing external or internal, diligently strives to awaken itself to a knowledge of the Most High, the stage attained is called ‘ Meditation on the Real’.

“ By long exercise of these six processes, when all sense of difference being lost, the mind reposes in its essential the Ultimate One, it has attained the ‘ Stage Transcendental.’.

“ O Rama, those blessed men who have reached the seventh stage are the saints who rejoice in self and have arrived at ‘ Beatitude ’.”

What can be a higher position than this for a man ? He that has put an end to all desires that arise out of infatuation, what limit is there to his joy ?

“ With the eradication of all earthly desires, the mist of worldly illusion vanishes and then, like the moon in the clear autumn sky, shineth in the heart that Supreme Intelligence who is

One, hath no beginning and no end, is Primal and Infinite."[87]

No one should understand me to say that all worldly activities must at this stage come to an end. 'Nobody should ever say if illusion is gone, what need is there for a life of action?' This is what Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in *Srimad Bhagavad Geeta*:[88]

> "As the ignorant act from attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world."

When we have been sent to this world, we must work for it. Only, we should conduct ourselves while here in accordance with what was enjoined upon Ramachandra by Vasishtha:[89]

> "O Raghava, do externally all the duties of this life, banishing from thy heart all hopes, desires and attachments."

Again,

> "Feigning passion externally, but having

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87. संकल्पसंक्षयवशाद् गलिते तु चित्ते
संसारमोहमिहिका गलिता भवन्ति।
दृष्टं विभाति शरदीव खमागताया
चिन्मात्रमेकमजमाद्यमनन्तमन्तः ॥

Yogavasishtha.

88. सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥

Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Ch. III, Sloka 25.

89. अन्तः संत्यक्तसर्वाशो वीतरागो विवासनः।
बहिः सर्वसमाचारो लोके विहर राघव ॥

Upashamaprakarana, Ch. XII, Sloka 52.

none within, a doer outside, no-doer within—move about like this, O Raghava, in this world."[90]

"O Raghava, without priding yourself upon being the doer of an act, indifferent to success or failure, in an unperturbed spirit engage in the concerns of this world, just like the sky which exists everywhere, but always remains unpolluted."[91]

"This is my friend, and not that—it is the narrow-minded who think thus. The liberal-minded are in kinship with the whole universe."[92]

What a noble lesson is here inculcated! You are to act in the world in order only to fulfil the law of God, without allowing yourself to feel that you are the author of the act. He that is an enemy outwardly, must be looked upon as a friend against whom you have to stand only because you want to put down immorality and uphold the cause of truth. Vice and immorality are our enemies, not any particular individual.

(ii) Cultivate universal love. Narrowness fosters infatuation. You remain infatuated with one person

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90. बहिः कृत्रिमसंरम्भो हृदि संरम्भवर्जितः ।
कर्त्ता बहिरकर्त्तान्तर्लोके विहर राघव ॥

Upashamaprakarana, Ch. XXI, Sloka 55.

91. त्यक्ताहंकृतिराश्वस्तमतिराकाशशोभनः ।
अगृहीतकलंकांको लोके विहर राघव ॥

Upashamaprakarana, Ch. XXI, Sloka 56.

92. अयं बन्धुरयं नेति गणना क्षुद्रचेतसां ।
उदारचरितानान्तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

Hitopadesa.

as long as you do not find another his or her like. Widen the circle of your love, and infatuation will give way. There can be no infatuation where love, instead of being centred upon one object only, diffuses over many.

Even in a mother's love there is infatuation. How many mothers are there who can look upon their neighbours' sons as their own ? That mother alone has freed herself from infatuation, who, without consideration of creed or caste, takes up into her arms any child that she comes across, caresses him, kisses him and treats him as her own.

Not to speak of domestic relationships, even friendship sometimes brings on infatuation. You love a man. His absence makes you extremely uneasy, you lose all peace of mind, and consequently neglect the daily duties of your life. This is all due to infatuation. Universal love is the remedy.

The more you cultivate pure love, the more it grows. And the more it grows, sweeter grows the heart. To the eye of love, even the ugliest of things will look handsome. Upon the meanest tree that grows, the lover of God will look with an eye different from ours. The least attractive of things wears to him a beauty which we fail to discover even in the most attractive of all objects. As you grow in love, your attraction grows and the more you are eager to love others, the more are others eager to love you. You will create a world of love around you. Like as the bee, you will seek for honey in all flowers, and what end is there of honeyed flowers in this earth, if only you have the eye for them ? The God of love has poured honey into all things—even into the heart of

the darkest of sinners. Look for it, and you will find it.

Universality is indeed an effective cure for all illusion. Illusion creates bigotry in religion. The more you grow in catholicity, the wiser you become and the less you fight for dogmas, and the greater the heart expands and the wider your arms open for the reception of people of all sects.

Look at the great Shakya Sinha—his heart overflowed with this nectarine stream of God's love, and therefore, in absolute self-abnegation he could throw off the object that he held dearest to his heart—his own beloved spouse. He had sunk deep in the love of the universe, and it was this which enabled him to kick out the petty love of this earth. Listen to the words he addressed to his wife on the eve of his departure—words that are pregnant with the fire of universal love :—

> "I loved thee most
> Because I loved so well all living souls."[93]

Love that does not embrace the universe is not love at all. It is nothing but infatuation. Infatuation confines itself within prescribed limits, while love spreads all over the universe. How that love works, is clear from the following lines that Buddha addresses again to his sleeping wife :

> "I will depart," he spake, "the hour is come!
> Thy tender lips, dear Sleeper, summon me
> To that which saves the earth, but sunders us."

It is the wife's love that prompts him to forsake her, and to go abroad to work out the world's salvation ! It would not be love but a besotting passion, if

93. *Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold. Tr.

it stood in the way of his working on the line of true love for the rescue of a world lost in sin. For, it is passion and not love that clings to the object it holds dear, and cannot leave it at duty's call. Chhandaka reminds the young Prince how his renunciation will cause the bitterest grief to his father, the King, and to the rest of the members of his family ; where, then, was his love for them, of which he was talking so much ? Rejoins Siddhartha :

"Friend, that love is false
Which clings to love for selfish sweets of love;
But I, who love these more than joy of mine,—
Yea, more than joy of theirs—depart to save
Them and all flesh, if utmost love avail."

A very Lion of the Shakyas, and like a true lion does he tread all base love under his foot, and goes out to the work of the greater universe that lay beyond the little pale of his family circle.

V. VANITY

(i) Vanity will never bear the test of self-examination. Think what you are, how limited your knowledge and your powers are.

He that boasts of his learning, I ask him, has he learnt anything about himself ? What are these limbs, what are the constituents they are made of ? Why is it that we can catch with our hands and see with our eyes and think with our mind ? If you cannot answer these questions, why boast of your powers ? You say you excel in a particular branch of knowledge. What, I ask you, have you done in that line with your own independent exertions ? Ponder over these questions for a few minutes, and then tell me if you find anything to boast of.

Scholar, dost thou boast of thy learning? Let me put to thee but one question—dost thou know thyself? Not to speak of the soul within, canst thou tell me what a particle of blood is? You physicist, that brag so much of your knowledge of the sciences, can you say where does a particle of sand come from, and what element is it made of? Can you say why magnet attracts iron? This universe that surrounds us, I challenge you to tell me the truth about the meanest molecule of its dust or water.

Those that boast of their powers, what powers, indeed, have they? An orator will perhaps say, I can charm this world with my eloquence. Art thou, my friend, the author of those powers? Or, have you even always the control of them? But yesterday I saw you making a most stirring speech, charming the hearts of thousands, and, yet, what a sad fate overtakes your efforts to-day—not a single soul is moved, though you are doing the best you can?

So about the poet, and the mathematician and the warrior. Even the best of poets has sometimes been known to produce but dull third-rate verses in spite of his best efforts. And how often do we find the great mathematician beaten hollow in his own art by the humblest of his disciples! The brave general that hoisted the flag of victory yesterday before enormous odds, behold, is crushed today by a handful of the enemy's men!

Now, then, if we have no control over our powers, what is there to boast of? Take this body itself, and see how far you are its master. You stretch out your hand to catch a thing that lies nearest to you: a sudden fit of palsy strikes it numb. You are talking: one

moment, and the tongue may refuse to speak any more.

There was an old man in this town who used to say, " I am not mine own ; for, I think one way and it happens the other." How weak indeed is all human agency and how frail are man's vaunted capacities ! How often are the best of our expectations frustrated by an unexpected turn of events !

Let us never forget that the very small powers we have, come from Him above. There is a beautiful anecdote in the Kenopanishad :[94]

> There was once a great war between the gods (*Devatas*) and the Demons (*Asuras*). God so ordained it that the *Devatas* won and the *Asuras* lost. The *Devatas* thought they had won the battles by their own prowess, and were puffed up, and forgot how God had granted them victory. God who sees through the hearts of all, came to know of this and thought of teaching them a lesson. And He came down amongst them in a strange form, and they wondered who it could be as they did not know Him. Then they sent the god Fire to Him to see if he could bring them any information about the stranger. Fire comes to him, and God asks Fire, " Who art thou, my good friend ? " " I am Fire, *Yataveda*," says he. " What are thy powers ? " " I can burn down whatever there is on the earth." God then placed a straw before Fire, and asked him to burn it. Fire tried with all the strength he could command, but could not burn the straw. Then he went back vanquished, and told the *Devatas*,

94. Khanda III.

"Friends, I am unable to tell you who this great being is." And they sent Wind to Him to try if he could tell them anything better about the stranger. Wind came and He asked, "Who are you, my friend ?" "Wind," said he. "May I ask what your powers are ?" "I can draw away all that you see on the face of this earth." "Here is a piece of straw for you. Draw this, if you please." Wind tried his utmost, but failed. Then he came back to the *Devatas,* his pride humbled. Now, the *Devatas* betook themselves to Indra, their King. Indra appears, and the strange being at once vanishes out of sight. Indra looks up, and, behold, a beautiful form bedecked with jewels, presents herself in the heavens. He gazed in wonder, and then asked her, who was no other than the goddess Uma, who the vanished being was. She says, "It was God Himself. You gained a victory, and imagined it was through your own powers. He came down to crush your pride, and shew you how helpless you are without Him."

What is there in us for pride, if the hands cannot move, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the tongue cannot taste, the mind cannot think nor intellect apprehend, without the help of the Power that is in us ?

"He is the ear of our ears, the mind of our minds, the speech of our speeches. He is the soul of our souls, and the eye of our eyes."[95]

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95. श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह वाचम् ।
स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः चक्षुषश्चक्षुः ॥
Kenopanishad, Khanda I, Sloka 2.

Again,

> "Who would have stirred, who would have been alive, had it not been for the God who is joy itself, and whose form is as that of the vast void?"[96]

You are only trading in borrowed goods, and if your creditor will take them back any moment he likes, what a wretched beggar you are! Not to speak of taking them away—can you render an account to Him of all that you have received from Him—how you have used them in life? I can very well imagine what a heavy misappropriation your accounts will show. Is there a single soul among us, who is able to stand up and say he can place a clean sheet before his Master? Kavira[97] realized this when he said:

> "Kavira burst into tears at the sight of the grinding mill of this world—not a single soul comes out unscathed from between the two stones!"

And then, as to your pride, how can you say you are superior to any particular individual, when you have no capacity to enter into his mind and see what is there in it, and when you have not even the power to know your own heart? Is it not a fact that a lack of self-examination often makes us blind to our own sins? Any moment you search into your heart, you will find how innumerable are the sins that are eating

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96. कोह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् यदेष
आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् ।

Taittirlyopanishad, Valli II, Anuvak 7, Sloka 2.

97. A famous Hindi writer and preacher of Vaishnavism, originally a Mahomedan weaver, flourished in the early part of the fifteenth century. Tr.

into your very vitals. A moment's reflection will show that much of what we pride upon is a source of shame to us.

A certain Mussalman dervish grew very much proud of his piety. He fancied that a camel came to him every night, and carried him to Heaven. Having enjoyed Heaven throughout the night, he would wake in the morning to find himself again in his own wretched hut. There was another dervish of the name of Jvanid, who once came to him and asked him how he was getting on. He then triumphantly related to Jvanid how he used to enjoy Heaven every night. Jvanid then related to him a verse from the Koran, and asked him to repeat the verse thrice when he would be in Heaven again. The dervish did so the next night, and behold, all the angels of Heaven who had come to him, fled away in horror, leaving him alone. He cast his eyes about, and found nothing but heaps of bones of the dead on all sides.

How many of us thus enjoy Heaven in imagination! Go down into the heart, and see what is there beneath all this brilliant exterior—all this pomp and splendour—this great name and fame that you have made for yourself—nothing but bones of the dead! Thou great preacher, that makest so much of thy wisdom and piety, and art so much idolised by thy disciples, examine thyself, and thou shalt find all is hollow within, all this teaching and preaching is a sham, a mockery! Thou Judge of the highest tribunal in the land, proud of thy rank attained merely by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, look about, how many there are whom thou lookest down upon as thy inferiors, but who are really superior to thee in many

respects! You are daily sitting in judgment over so many people's cases: I ask you to go and sit in your own private closet, and there, as you take the name of God, ponder and judge what knowledge, what power of understanding and what honesty you possess yourself, whether you can pass a decree in your favour for as much as you fancied you were entitled to, whether what you thought you had, really belongs to you. I daresay you will cry out, 'O, what was it I was priding upon! I see I am only a heap of ashes with a wall of white marble around it—all dry bones, and nothing but that!'

Keep your defects constantly present before the mind by means of self-examination, for vanity will then give way. It is because we look more to our excellences than to our defects, that we grow proud. Bring out your defects one by one by means of a searching self-examination, and make a list of the more prominent of them. Vanity can never come in where the man is always conscious of some shortcomings and such a man is bound to be humble in spirit. Like the great dervish Boyazid, he will say, "Ask a particle of dust, and it will say Boyazid is in no way superior to it." An ascetic was one day passing by when from the roof of a house there came down upon his head some cold ashes and charcoal. His companions got angry, and they were about to assault the culprit, when the ascetic stopped them, and said with a smiling face, "What is this you are going to do? He that deserves a shower of burning charcoal, has been favoured with one of cold ashes only. How lucky must he be!" Self-examination is sure to make you lowly in spirit, like this great sage. Make a list

of the many faults that you have, and vanity will never find a place in your mind. Self-examination on the lines I have indicated is one of the principal means of rooting out vanity.

(ii) Think of the evil consequences of vanity, and the mind will shrink from it. In the *Mahabharata* Sanak Sujata thus points out to Dhritarashtra the eighteen vices that spring out of vanity:

> "I have not related before the eighteen vices which arise out of vanity. They are: hatred of men, trying to do injury to them, faultfinding, speaking falsehood, lust, anger, servility, backbiting, crookedness, loss of money, quarrelsomeness, envy, oppression, spite, illusion, use of disrespectful language, loss of reason and jealousy. So the wise will never be subject to vanity, for it is very reprehensible."[98]

If these eighteen vices take possession of a man, is any manliness left in him? Who is so pitiable as the proud man who always thinks he is going up, while all the time he is only coming down?

Pride must lead to a fall, sooner or later. A proud man can never rise high. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

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98. मदोऽष्टादशदोषः स्यात् स पुरा यः प्रकीर्त्तितः ।
लोकद्वेष्यं प्रातिकूल्यमभ्यसूयामृषावचः ॥
कामक्रोधौ पारतन्त्र्यं परिवादोऽथ पैशुनं ।
अर्थहानिर्विवादश्च मात्सर्यं प्राणिपीड़नम् ॥
ईर्षामोहोऽतिवादश्च संज्ञानाशोऽभ्यसूयिता ।
तस्मात् प्राज्ञो न माद्येत सदा ह्येतद्विगर्हितम् ॥
Mahabharata, Udyogaparva, Ch. LV, Slokas 9-11.

None but they are permitted to enter the mansions of the blessed. There is a Bengali song :

> "Those that are guilty of the sin of pride, can never see Me. Every one knows I am the Friend of those that are lowly in spirit."

A Mahomedan devotee used to say, "When the Lord is in, the Ego in me is out. And when the Ego is up, the Lord is out. It has been so with me for the last thirty years of my life. The more I cry for Him, the more he says, 'There is no room for us both. One must go, either thou or I'." The gates of Heaven are closed to you till you eradicate this Ego in you. Instance the beautiful anecdote of the Pandava brothers ascending Heaven. The five brothers are on the way. Sahadeva suddenly drops down. Bhima asks Yudhishthira the cause of Sahadeva's fall. The virtuous king replies:

> "This prince always thought none was so wise as he. This is why he falls."[99]

The rest of the brothers resume their journey when Nakula drops off. Bhima asks Yudhishthira why Nakula falls, and Yudhishthira says:

> "Because this young man thought none was so handsome as he. Come on, my brother."[100]

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99. आत्मनः सदृशं प्राज्ञं नैषोऽमन्यत कञ्चन ।
तेन दोषेण पतितस्तस्मादेव नृपात्मजः ॥

Mahabharata, Mahaprasthanika Parva, Ch. II.

100. रूपेण मत्समो नास्ति कश्चिदित्यस्य दर्शनम् ।
अधिकश्चाहमेवैक इत्यस्य मनसि स्थितम् ।
नकुलः पतितस्तस्मादागच्छ त्वं वृकोदर ॥

Mahabharata, Mahaprasthanika Parva, Ch. II.

After this falls the great Arjuna and says Yudhishthira :

> "This Arjuna, who boasted of his valour, once said, 'I will destroy all my foes in one day,' and this he failed to do. He was the foremost of all archers, and did therefore look down upon the rest of his class. Therefore falls he for never will a man boast of his powers who seeks his own welfare."[101]

A few steps forward, and the mighty Bhima rolls down and enquires about the reason of his fall. Yudhishthira replies :

> "You ate too much, and prided upon your own strength and heeded not the strength of others. This is why you fall."[102]

It is bound to be so. Pride consumes all that leads to happiness in a man.

There is no life so miserable as that of a proud man. "Pride," says the well-known proverb, "is the bane of happiness." This is so for at least three reasons : first, because the proud man thinks that others must bow down their heads to him, while he finds that the prouder he grows, the more he is slight-

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101. एकाह्ना निर्दहेयं वै शत्रूनित्यर्जुनोऽब्रवीत् ।
न च तत्कृतवानेष शूरमानी ततोऽपतत् ॥
अवमेने धनुर्ग्राहानेष सर्वांश्च फाल्गुनः ।
तथा चैतन्न तु तथा कर्त्तव्यं भूमिमिच्छता ॥

Mahabharata, Mahaprasthanika Parva, Ch. II.

102. अतिभुक्तञ्च भवता प्राणेन तु विकत्थसे ।
अनवेक्ष्य परं पार्थ तेनासि पतितः क्षितौ ॥

Mahabharata, Mahaprasthanika Parva, Ch. II.

ed. Secondly, because he is jealous of the honour and respect enjoyed by others as he thinks he alone is entitled to it, and he therefore busies himself in devising measures for their humiliation. Lastly, he loses all peace of mind in finding out who it is that fails to appreciate his worth or neglects to listen to his vain declarations, or has not sufficiently prostrated himself before him.

Think of these evil consequences of pride, and always strive to keep it off.

(iii) Look up to those that are superior to you, and try to find out their virtues and compare yourself with them in an unbiassed spirit.

Riches, honour, learning, heroism, piety—take any one of these, and is there a single man on earth who can sincerely say to himself, 'I am superior to all in this respect'? Look up, and you will find how many there are who are superior to you. But let me suppose for a moment that you are the richest man on earth, or say, the wisest. Even then, what of the other virtues? There are thousands, you will find, who are much higher than yourself in many other respects. And, who is there that can point to himself and say for a moment, 'Lo, I am better than all in every respect'? Come out of the little nook in which you have shut up yourself, and look into the limitless universe that lies before you, and see how little you are! A village magnate will dwindle into a non-entity when he comes to a town, and a grandee of the town will find himself lost in the glory of a city.

Let us only look around us, and among the very neighbours we slight as our inferiors, we often discover virtues that are rare in ourselves. Where, then,

goes all the pride and the vaunting ? We have to hang down our heads for very shame, and repent of what we thought of them. It often happens that a man whom you do not condescend to touch, turns out to be one at whose feet you would consider it a privilege to sit. Who is inferior to another upon this earth ? For, what there is in you may not be in me, and yet again you may not have that which is in me. Every one is your superior in some respects, though he may be your inferior in others. God has not granted to any one the right to say to his fellow-being, 'Thou art my inferior.'

We often find fault with others without examining their actions. Nothing is so unwise. For, very often, when the truth comes out, how sadly it reveals our sapience ! If you see a man killing another at a distance, and if from that you at once conclude that the man is one of the blackest sinners on earth, it is quite possible you will soon be undeceived, and discover that the man is after all one of the bravest that you have seen, who by that act prevented, say, a brutal attempt at dishonouring a lady. Thus we see that we have no right to judge of a man's conduct before we have thoroughly examined it, and in every case, till that is done, it is very difficult to say who is inferior to whom.

There is a fine story in the *Tapasamala* which beautifully illustrates the point. The dervish Hossein of Bussora was once passing by the bank of the river Dajala, when he noticed a Negro drinking something out of a bottle with a woman by his side. The dervish at once concluded it was some wine that the man was drinking in company with a bad woman, and

thought to himself that he was superior to this man at least, as he never drank wine in company with a woman. This thought was agitating the dervish's mind, when he saw a boat in the river which suddenly capsized on account of the violent waves. The Negro at once jumped into the river and saved six men out of the boat's crew. Hossein was struck with wonder and he came to the Negro, got into conversation with him, and soon came to learn that the Negro's companion was no other than his mother, and that the bottle from which they were drinking contained nothing but pure water. "I was watching you," said the Negro, "to see if you had eyes, and found that you had none." Hossein at once fell at the Negro's feet and said, "Pardon me, brother. You have just saved those six men from the fury of the river. Save me, friend, from the whirlpool of the river of vanity." Never again in his life did Hossein consider himself superior to any one. A dog was once pointed out to Hossein and he was asked, 'Who was the better of the two?'. "I am superior to this dog," said Hossein, "so long as I lead a virtuous life. Otherwise, the dog is superior to a hundred Hosseins like myself." Who is there among us that can stand up and say he has led a spotless life ?

(iv) Think of your relation to this world, and of the duties and responsibilities that attach to it. The feeling will then surely come upon you how weak you are, and this will help you in keeping down vanity. How wide is the circle of your duties—duties towards your own body and mind, towards the family and the society you belong to, towards the country and the world at large—O, how multitudi-

nous are the virtues you have to master in order to faithfully discharge them all! Seriously think of them for a moment and the mind will stagger at the thought, and where goes your vaunting! How many of the most gifted of men, who could perhaps glory in the very highest wisdom or the noblest beneficence, have looked back with sighs and regrets upon their life-work, impressed with the magnitude and the proportions of the duties that were left undone! And thou, a mere cipher to them, thou vauntest of the little knowledge or the few virtues thou hast!

Even supposing you could faithfully discharge all your duties, what is there to exult in? What is there of special virtue in the proper discharge of one's duties? The neglect of them should be visited with penalty. What father is there that will take pride in maintaining his son, or what son in maintaining his decrepit father, or what wife in faithfully serving her husband? So long as you do nothing more than what duty enjoins, what is there to boast of, though there may be room for regret if you are found wanting? You have no right to exult in a proper use of your powers, though abuse of them will bring on punishment.

Conquer pride by thinking of your past life, for there are few who can cast their eyes back, and march forward in the career of life, without their pride being considerably humbled down.

(v) Contemplate the transitory nature of the objects of your pride. They vanish with death—but why speak of death? Have you not seen how in life, wealth, intellect, honour and influence, all succumb to the irony of fate? Who wielded greater influence

over men than the great Napoleon Bonaparte, and yet, had he not to die in fetters ? Who was so proud of his powers as Cardinal Wolsey, and yet how was his pride humbled down to lick the very dust of the earth ! And in wisdom, how many have excelled that prince of thinkers, Auguste Comte ? But where was all his wisdom gone, when he was struck with insanity ! Instances need hardly be added to prove the transitory nature of wealth and beauty.

(vi) Do not listen to your own praise, for it feeds one's vanity to hear one's virtues recounted. On the other hand, an open acknowledgment of your own shortcomings is of great use. Confess your pride and meekly ask for condign punishment from friends, and this will act as a deterrent from pride. Once a pious devotee came to Boyazid, a great Mussalman dervish, and said, "How is it that I have kept the *Ramzan* fast every day these thirty years, and am sitting up nights in constant prayer, and yet have not been able to attain to a knowledge of God ?" To this said Boyazid, "Go on like this for thirty hundred years, and it will be the same with you." "Why ?" asked the man. "Because," said Boyazid, "you have covered your life with a veil." "What is the remedy ?" enquired the man. "Go and shave thy head clean. Cast off all that contributes to the beauty of thy person. Give up this cloth that you have worn, and put on a blanket. And then go to that part of the town where you are most widely known, and have with you some toys. Let little boys come to you and offer them the toys for pushing you by the neck. Give them as many toys as they give you pushes. Thus pushed, go about all the

quarters of the town. Fix your residence where you are most insulted. This will be of the highest good to you." There can be no better advice than this for the conquest of vanity. For, vanity flies as soon as you make a clean breast of all your defects to those that were accustomed to hear from you of nothing but your glories, and court neglect from those that were formerly asked only to wonder and worship. But confession itself may again give rise to vanity at the thought of being lauded on account of sincerity. Whenever this happens, once confess that, and vanity shall be knocked on the head and if you always follow this course, you will soon purge your mind of this baneful vice.

These are some of the special remedies for the cure and prevention of vanity. One must not, however, lose sight of the general remedies suggested before.

VI. ENVY

(i) Love is the best antidote to envy. The prosperity of a friend you love sincerely will never excite your jealousy, will rather gladden your heart. Study, therefore, the virtues of the man that you have made the object of your envy, for his virtues may attract your love. And envy diminishes in proportion as the sphere of love widens.

(ii) A narrow heart fosters envy. He that thinks that a particular person has monopolised all the comforts, the honour and the affluence available on earth may, indeed, be smitten with envy. But he that takes a broader view of things and feels that the wide world both outside and inside offers endless

means of acquiring happiness, honour and riches and that every one has the capacity for attaining celebrity in one or other sphere of life, can have no room for envy in his heart. As catholicity grows, envy is bound to give way.

(iii) Backbiting always goes hand in hand with envy. The more envy takes possession of your heart, the more your tongue rejoices in slander. And the more you can conquer this habit of speaking ill of others, the more likely you are to succeed in mastering this passion. Two means will be found to be of special help for the purpose. First, never forget your own faults. For, he that is sensible of his own shortcomings, with what face can he speak of others' faults ? Second, always look into the bright side of human character rather than into its dark side, and seek the company of those that are always willing to recognize virtues in their neighbours' character. Take the most condemned sinner, and try to single out his virtues, and you will soon find what a joy it gives you to contemplate them. If there is any one whom you feel particularly disposed to backbite, let your eyes be always fixed upon his virtues, of which there must be some, and in conversation with friends, dwell upon those virtues and applaud them as much as they deserve. This will gradually take away from you all propensity for calumniating others, and will, besides, give you the rare delight appreciation of virtue always brings with it.

(iv) If you are an honest striver after purity and good character, you cannot envy others. For, all progress depends upon the emulation of what is good, and is opposed to envy. He that earnestly seeks pro-

gress has to observe and assimilate virtues wherever he finds them, and has therefore no time to pry into men's faults with an evil eye ; for, an envious fault-finder will seek to do nothing but evil unto others, and will scarcely have time to do good, even unto himself. While emulation and assimilation of others' virtues are an essential attribute of progress which always tries to rise up to the standard of its ideal, envy always seeks to bring down to its level whatever is higher and nobler than itself.

(v) And then think of the results of envy. What a pitiable sight does the envious mind present ! Whatever on earth brings joy to the human heart, causes the utmost pain to the envious mind. Who is there on earth that will not delight to see beauty or happiness or the display of courage, or such other virtues in men ? But O, what a mortification they will be to a heart stricken with envy ! What gladdens other hearts, kindles the fires of hell in his. Who is there that can portray the miseries of a man to whom nectar itself is as poison, heaven is as hell, and the full moon night the darkest of all nights ? Here are thousands that sing the virtues of a hero and consider themselves glorified thereby—the envious man listens to them and is stung to the quick. Fancy a man more unfortunate than he.

The mind shudders to think of the miseries of one that has made fault-finding a profession, for he can look at nothing but the dark side of a picture. Envy acts upon the mind like poison upon the body, for an envious mind constantly feels uneasy. His health gives way, his mind becomes enervated, he always feels reluctant to do his duties, and he soon

loses all cheerfulness of spirit. Almost all quarrels originate in envy. It has thus very often caused the ruin of individuals and the downfall of nations.

(v) Remember what Lord Bacon has said, for this will certainly put the envious man to shame: "A man that hath no virtue in himself ever envieth virtue in others. For, men's minds will either feed upon their own good or upon others' evil. And who wanteth the one, will prey upon the other: and whoso is out of hope to attain another's virtue, will seek to come at even hand by depressing another's fortune." He, who is capable of acquiring a virtue, always tries to rise equal to it, and he, who feels that he is not so capable, always tries to bring down a man who has attained a high level to his own lower level. A base and enervated heart is the seat of envy. Remember this and you will never allow yourself to be a prey to envy.

VII. DESULTORINESS

(i) This is a vice which arises out of the mind not being properly disciplined. It therefore decreases in proportion as the mind is brought under discipline. And the most effective discipline is that which trains the mind in the cultivation of and steadfast adherence to some fixed habits of daily life. The habit of doing work according to the mere impulse of the moment and of neglecting engagements, are great obstacles in the way of overcoming this vice. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to fix a routine for daily work and then to adhere to it strictly. Resolve that a duty must be done at the exact moment assigned to it. If you have got to do something

at 8 o'clock, you must not allow yourself to be so deeply engaged at 7 with, say, a musical entertainment—even if it be a *Sankirtana*—as to overstep the hour of work ; for, nothing so fosters desultoriness as habits like these. To forget duty is certainly not desirable even though it were for singing God's praises. To those who deem the latter a much higher occupation, I would ask, 'Is not Work but another name for Worship ? ' Chanting hymns is not surely a nobler function than the discharge of one's duties, for hymns only cheer up the heart, and fill it with devotional fervour and thus fits you out for the task that lies before you. These remarks will not, of course, apply to those that have made the singing of hymns their life-work—men, for example, like the great Sri Chaitanya. I know of a gentleman who one afternoon went to see another gentleman of distinguished piety in this country. They engaged in conversation on spiritual topics and went on till it was evening, and it was the ardent desire of both that the charming occupation should proceed far into the night. But it became necessary for the visitor to leave on account of an imperative call of duty. The visitor, therefore, in the midst of the conversation, asked for leave to withdraw, and the pious old gentleman, though very much unwilling to part with him, allowed him to go, and observed, "I am extremely delighted to see that you are able to leave this intoxication for a call of duty."

Benjamin Franklin affords the brightest example of those who have laid down a routine of daily work and most faithfully followed it. This routine which

he has inserted in his Autobiography, is highly instructive, and is therefore reproduced below :

FRANKLIN'S DAILY ROUTINE

Morning Question:—What good shall I do this day?	5 6 7	Rise, wash and pray. Contrive day's business, and take the resolution of the day. Study and break-fast.
	8 9 10 11	Work
Noon	12 1	Read or overlook my accounts and dine.
Evening Question:—What good have I done to-day?	6 7 8 9	Put things in their places. Supper, music or diversion or conversation. Examination of the day.
Night	10 11 12 1 2 3 4	Sleep

Every one of us should, according to the conditions of his life and surroundings, prepare a routine on this model, and endeavour to regulate his life accordingly.

(ii) Desultoriness is a great obstacle in the way of acquiring those virtues which it is necessary to acquire for the attainment of devotion. It is because we are slaves to this habit of desultoriness that we do not care to ascertain by daily self-examination how far we have succeeded in mastering each particular virtue. Franklin made a list of some virtues, and devised an ingenious method of ascertaining how far he succeeded in acquiring or failed to acquire any particular virtue, each day of the week. This system

ought to be followed by every one. This will drive away all desultoriness, and fill the soul with virtues. He selected thirteen virtues and allotted one week to the practice of each virtue. In that particular week, he fixed his attention specially on that particular virtue, but he was never unmindful of the rest. He made a little book in which he allotted a page to each of the virtues. He ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. He crossed these columns with thirteen red lines marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of each one of the virtues on which line and in its proper column he might mark by a little black spot every fault he found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day (see Table at page 132).

(iii) Leading a life without restraint largely conduces to desultoriness. It is therefore expedient that one should guide one's self according to the directions of somebody upon whom he can rely, and who is really a superior type of man, and should be followed with the implicit obedience of a soldier following the commands of his captain. It is of the utmost importance that you should put down all forms of wantonness.

(iv) The practice of what is known as *Trataka* may be suggested as a remedy. This means that you are to fix your eyes upon a point without a wink as long as you can do so at a stretch, short of tiring them out. *Pranayama*[103] is also a similar remedy. Both of these methods will train the mind to habits of

103. See foot-note, *ante* p. 67. Tr.

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
Temperance.							
Silence.	*	*		*		*	
Order.	*	*			*	*	†
Resolution.		*				*	
Frugality.						*	
Industry.			*				
Sincerity.							
Justice.							
Moderation.							
Cleanliness.							
Tranquillity.							
Chastity.							
Humility.							

concentration, and thus help it in mastering desultoriness.

(v) Contemplate the harmony that prevails in the universe. This world around us, how methodically it is conducting itself—the sun rising every day at its appointed time, and setting also at the appointed hour ; the sixteen phases of the moon waxing or waning in accordance with an immutable law ; the stars and planets always moving in strict obedience to some unalterable laws ; the seasons of the year punctually turning up in due course, the fire burning and the wind blowing and the clouds floating—all chained to some unalterable laws. And if everything else in the universe follows a law, why should man alone break it and lead an aimless life, tossing about like a vessel on the high seas without a rudder ? A little observation will convince you that there is an immutable Divine law that is ceaselessly working through the world, and he, that will bow to that law and regulate his life in accordance with it, will grow in joy and happiness as years grow upon him, and he, that will shut his eyes to this truth and will send himself adrift on the world like a log of wood on the billows of the great sea, will have nothing before him but a life of sorrow and repentance. By all means, avoid desultoriness and strive to achieve the true end of life.

VIII. WORLDLY ANXIETY

For those that are always troubled with worldly anxieties, it is very difficult to grow in *Bhakti*. It is therefore necessary that you should be entirely free from their influence.

(i) Many of these are due to an exaggerated sense of our needs and sometimes also to a fear lest people should speak ill of us. I have already said that man's real wants are but few—it is the fancied wants that make us miserable and very often lead us into ruin. We forget that there are not many things which are indispensable to man here on earth. 'How can I get on in the world without this?' 'How can I appear in society without that?'—how much of your life is wasted by anxious thoughts like these? He who, on the other hand, does not think for the morrow but commits himself to God's care for the necessaries of life and works on in this spirit from day's end to day's end, who is convinced that it is foolish to create imaginary needs and then pant for their satisfaction, never can the world's cares disturb the serenity of his mind. Artificial needs are the pest of our society. Thousands of our people hourly busy themselves with thoughts as to how to bedeck their wives' persons with jewellery or to spend more money than they can afford upon their parents' *Sradh.*[104] Their condition is really pitiable.

(ii) If your mind be absorbed with good thoughts, there will be no room for worldly anxieties. The company of *Sadhus*, the study of scriptures or of sciences and pure amusements will drive them away. Many of you may have read the story of 'Jungly' Ramnath, in Babu Raj Narain Bose's[105] *Shekal ar Ekal i.e.* 'That Age and This.' This Brahmin, who

104. The ceremony of funeral oblations Tr.

105. For many years President of the Adi Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, and author of several books in Bengali. He was one of the distinguished *alumni* of the old Hindu College, and was universally respected for varied learning and high piety. Born Sep. 1826. Died Sep. 1899. Tr.

was called 'Jungly' because he knew no luxury, so completely lost himself in the study of the *Nyaya* Philosophy,[106] that he knew no cares of the world. He lived in extreme poverty and his neighbours said he was the poorest man in the village. Raja Krishnachandra[107] once called upon him and asked him, 'Sir, have you any *anupapatti?*' Now, this term means 'want,' but has also a technical meaning in the *Nyaya* Philosophy, viz. a question for which no solution has been found. Rāmnath, who could think of nothing but his philosophy, said he could recollect no such question at the moment. The Rajah, to make himself more intelligible, enquired, 'Have you any *asangati?*' This again has a technical sense and meant 'self-contradiction,' and the Pundit at once replied, "No, I have been able to steer clear of all such contradictions." The Rajah saw that the Brahmin could think of nothing but his books. He therefore plainly put the question to him, whether he had any worldly wants. "No," replied Ramnath, "I have a few bighas of land, and the paddy I get from them is enough for me. The tamarind tree that you see there, my wife prepares sour curry with its leaves, and I relish my rice with it immensely. I can discover no want that I have." Who of us is there that will not seek such contentment? In a heart like Ramnath's, is there any room for anxiety?

(iii) Look below, and see how many there are who are far worse off than yourself, and this will reconcile

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106. One of the six schools of Hindu Philosophy corresponding with Logic. Tr.

107. The Ruler of Navadwipa or Nuddea during the eighteenth century, was a great patron of learning, in whose court flourished some of the greatest Bengali poets. Tr.

you to your lot. Here is a beautiful story related in the *Sadbhavashataka*:

> Once I had no shoes on, and I felt very miserable. With a heavy heart did I wend my way to the temple for worship. There I found a man who had lost his legs. And this removed all my sorrow. How long can you grieve over your want, if only you think of others' wants? A traveller one night lost his way in a dense forest, and was thus lamenting: "Oh, what a dense jungle have I come into! On account of the darkness I can find no way out, and the cold, Oh, how bitter! How terribly I am shivering, Oh!" While thus bewailing his fate, some one called out to him and said, "Grieve not, thou good traveller, but come and look at me here. True, thou art suffering a good deal from cold but art yet standing upon firm ground. Here am I fallen into this well and somehow supporting myself in the water, holding to the rings by the hand. I am plunged up to the chin, and it is with the utmost difficulty that I am yet able to keep my head above water. Thank God, that thou hast not fallen into the well like myself."

(iv) Those that are a prey to worldly cares should never live alone. For, that will foster anxiety. Let them seek the company of those that lead holy and contented lives. Instances are not few of men who have not what to eat on the morrow, and yet always wear a cheerful and smiling look. The example of such men will be a great help to you in conquering worldly anxiety.

(v) Nothing better can be said on this subject than what Jesus said to his disciples :[108]

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment ?

"Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?

"Which of you taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature ?

"And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin :

"And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?

"Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed ?

"For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.

108. *Matthew*, Ch. VI, verses 25-34. Tr.

> "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

IX. WORLDLY CRAFT

This is the vice of temporising with God. It does not allow Him to have an entire ascendancy of the heart. While anxious to pose as a devotee, the man does his best to preserve his worldly interests intact. He seems to think God is not clever enough to see through his tricks. Appearances do not always succeed with man, and how then is it possible to imagine that a false show of sentiment can be palmed off with success upon Him? It is the height of foolishness to think that you can serve God and Mammon at the same time. It is perfectly possible that a man should do his duties by the world and serve his God at the same time. But the idea of dividing his heart between God and Mammon is foolish. There is a Bengali song:

> "I shall not be satisfied with any thing short of a whole-hearted love. Don't present me with the refuse of a worldly love. He who weighs and calculates and then offers love, he cannot be called a Lover; he is a vendor of the world's merchandise and is of the earth, earthy."

There are some who seem to think that although they commit sins in the practice of their daily vocations, the virtues that they acquire, say, by occasionally doing good to others, will act as a counterpoise, and the balance will result in securing to them a safe place in Heaven in the end. Can you, I ask them,

pour a *chhatak* of cow's urine in a *maund* of milk, and then say, 'Lo, there are now at least 39 *seers* 15 *chhataks* of pure milk in the vessel?' Following the same logic, one should say that water is safe in a vessel as long as it is corked tight, never mind if there is a leak at the bottom! Remember what Manu[109] says:

> "Of the senses, if one will slip, all wisdom is lost, as a single hole in a vessel will allow all the water in it to leak out."

No average can be worked out in the world of religion. I have read the story of an Englishman who used to practise an 'average' piety, though he stuck at nothing to gain his worldly ends. He attended Church regularly, and freely gave alms to the poor. To his friends, he always stated his belief that in spite of occasional lapses, he was on the whole sure of salvation as he had also earned some virtues by regularly attending Church and giving alms to the poor. This gentleman once employed a Scotch contractor for fencing a plot of pasture-land. The contractor worked upon the fencing for a few days and then presented his bill. The gentleman asked him how the work was done and the contractor replied, 'It was all right on the average.' The employer failed to understand what it meant, and he went to examine the work himself. He found to his surprise that the fencing was indeed run up all round the space, but that there were big gaps here and there. He then enquired of the contractor, "What is meant by this

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109. इन्द्रियाणान्तु सर्वेषां यद्येकं क्षरतीन्द्रियं ।
तेनास्य क्षरति प्रज्ञा दृतेः पात्रादिवोदकम ॥
Manusamhita, Ch. II, Sloka 99.

fencing you have done for me ? Will not cattle come out through the spaces you have left open ? " " How will it be so ?" rejoined the contractor. "Look at either side of the open spaces, and you will find the fencing twice or thrice as thick. Will not this doubling or trebling the fence on either side make up for the gaps ? And is not the fencing, I ask you, all right on the average ? " The Englishman said he was a fool to think so, and the contractor replied : " Sir, I knew the work would be quite as bad as you say. But, when I heard it was possible for a man to exercise an average piety, I thought I could also raise an average fence for you." This proved a good lesson for the worldly wise man, for he never afterwards attempted to live a life of 'average' piety.

There are some who think there is no harm in quibbling, whenever occasion needs. A boy does not attend school, but goes there before the lessons begin, and comes away. What would you think, if in answer to a question whether he had been to school, he were to say 'yes' ? I know there is a class of men who will not find fault with this boy, but God looks not into the words you use but into the motive with which you use them. 'Equivocation is cousin-german to lie.' 'A lie that is half the truth is ever the blackest of lies.'

Calculation is the soul of worldly craft. The worldly man will always busy himself in calculating how he can maintain or multiply his wealth and reputation. He thus forgets his God altogether. He that is not worldly-minded, will attend to the concerns of this life, but will always have his eyes fixed upon God. Paramahansa Ramakrishna used to say,

'People always manage their earthly concerns through trusted agents to whom they give power-of-attorney. Why not give such a power to God and live your days in peace?' This, indeed, is leading an ideal life. Wealth, honour and reputation all come of themselves to such a man. The spirit of calculation that characterises a worldly-minded man, can never bring with it peace or happiness. The great Paramahansa used to cite a very apt illustration on this point: Two men enter a mango grove full of trees laden with luscious fruits. One of them begins calculating the area of the garden, the number of trees in it, the number of branches on each tree, and the number of mangoes grown on each of the branches. And the other man, as he approaches each tree, plucks up the fruits, and loses no time in doing justice to them. Now, as they were admitted into the garden only for a short space of time, the time is over, and the gardener comes and asks them both to clear out. He that was eating has had his fill and is at once ready to walk out. But woe unto his companion! He has not yet completed his calculations, and is not therefore prepared to leave. The result is a quarrel with the gardener and a hard push at the neck of the calculator, which at once brings him out of the garden. This, alas, is the inevitable fate of the worldly wise. They will go on calculating and calculating till at length death overtakes them before they have come to the end of their calculaions and at a moment when they are hardly prepared to leave the world. Nothing is then left to them but sighs and regrets. These men always vaunt of their wisdom but

are in the end invariably undeceived, and find that few are so foolish as they.

(i) Mixing freely with little boys makes the heart open and sincere, and free of worldly cares. The less you frequent the company of the crooked people of the world, and the more you mix with open-minded little children, the more will the tendency to worldly-mindedness disappear. All eminent men of sacred memory loved little boys. We all know the memorable words of the great Jesus: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Paramahansa Tailanga Swami was highly fond of little boys, and often used to join in play with them. He had a small cart in which he sometimes seated himself, and the little children came and dragged it, and sometimes he seated the children in it and dragged it himself. *Yogis* always mix with children and acquire child-like simplicity of character. Every one that saw the great Ramakrishna knows what a child-like heart he had. He took no pains to conceal what he felt, no feelings of delicacy or fear of men ever disturbed him. He had not in him the slightest tinge of that hypocrisy which men constantly practise in life out of false shame or fear of men. Says Mahadeva in the *Jnanasankalini Tantra*:

> "A child-like frame of mind, free of all cares is true Yoga."[110]

(ii) Mix and converse with an open heart with your friends, and this will always act as a deterrent from worldly-mindedness.

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110. बालभावस्तयाभावोनिश्चिन्तोयोगउच्यते ।

(iii) That which cheers and expands the heart, such, for instance, as beautiful natural scenery and pure songs, is of great efficacy in this respect. A stroll in a flower-garden, a trip on a river, an ascent to a hill-top, always broadens the heart and tends to make it sincere.

(iv) Study the lives of illustrious men, and you will always find that a generous unselfishness and sincerity have uniformly marked their character and secured them the homage of mankind. Had they been like ordinary men bent upon worldly gain only, the world certainly would have long forgotten them. The more you study their character, the greater will be your disdain towards worldly-mindedness.

(v) Fear of what others may say often induces worldliness in us. To follow the dictates of conscience with a total disregard of what others may think of us, destroys all worldliness and secures honour and fame in the long run.

X. LOQUACITY

Loquacity makes us light-hearted. The *Yogis* therefore adopt a vow of silence. If you go on continuously prattling, you lose energy, and also depth of sentiment. No one likes to expose to public gaze what he would fain treasure up in his heart :—

> " The jewel that glistens in the depths of the heart, who will like it to be brought up for sale in the market ? "

It is for this reason that the publication of the *Mantra* given by a *Guru* is strictly prohibited. Pythagoras fully realised the necessity of acquiring this virtue of taciturnity and he therefore made it a rule

not to take in a man as his disciple who had not practised perfect silence for a period of full three years.

You can't be a *Bhakta* before you have learnt to control your tongue. In enumerating the characteristics of a *Bhakta*, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :

> "Unshaken by praise or reproach, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, my devotee, that man is dear to Me."[111]

A Mussalman *Sadhu* used to say, "Stop the fountain of your tongue and then the fountain of your heart will open out."

(i) He who talks too much should adopt a vow of silence so that he may acquire control over the tongue. It will be well for him to set apart at least one day in the week on which he will completely abstain from talking, except for special reasons.

(ii) A loquacious man should try to remain alone for a greater part of the day. This will tend to check the habit.

(iii) The methods adopted by Benjamin Franklin referred to at pp. 129-131 will be found highly beneficial.

XI. DISPUTATIOUSNESS

This vice lies in vainly wrangling over matters which we know do not admit of any solution, or in advancing insincere arguments. A spirit of dispu-

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111. तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ।।

Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. XII, Verse 19.

tatiousness is very much opposed to devotion. It destroys all tenderness of feeling, and unsettles the mind altogether. The great devotee Ramananda Roy has thus distinguished between a soul that tries to attain to a knowledge of God through mere disputations and one that tries to do so through Love :

> "The crow that lacks the sense of taste will peck at the bitter fruits of the *Neem* tree, while the discerning bird *Kokil* feeds upon the mango blossoms. Such is the difference between the poor intellectual and the blessed man of faith."

As another Vaishnava poet puts it, "*Bhakti* attracts Krishna, but He keeps Himself far away from disputation." Disputations will never enable us to realise God, for He is beyond the power of human comprehension. "He is not to be grasped by the mind," as the Vedas have it. Says the *Kathopanishad:* [112]

> "How can you apprehend Him, save only by saying that He exists ?"

There are instances of men running mad by vain discussion over matters which it is beyond the power of the human mind to comprehend. Milton exposes the utter absurdity of such discussions by representing the followers of Satan as engaged in hair-splitting disputations. They were, as the great poet puts it, "in wandering mazes lost." So Narada has it in his *Bhakti Sutra:* [113]

> "Do not indulge in vain discussions."

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112. अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथन्तदुपलभ्यते ।

Valli II, Verse 12.

113. वादो नावलम्ब्यः Sutra 74.

There are many amongst us who cannot resist the temptation of engaging in such discussions. In our students' lodges in Calcutta, this pernicious habit sometimes appears at its worst. Those that are stricken with this malady, should immediately leave that place where they find such a discussion imminent.

Music, singing God's name, the study of religious books and conversation on religious topics will act as a deterrent from this vice by infusing lively sentiments into the heart.

XII. PHARISAISM

This is one of our chief maladies. We are always anxious to make a display of piety. To pass for a devotee or a pious man is a burning desire with many of us. This diminishes the real religious feeling if there is any within you, and perverts the mind. The remedy lies in assuming appearances. The late Keshub Chandra Sen gave a piece of sound advice to the Brahmos on this subject: "The hypocrites of this earth always conceal a dark heart beneath a bright exterior. Worshippers of God, let there be with you a bright interior within a dark exterior. Conceal within your soul the nectar of God's love.....If you have fasted for the purpose of purifying your mind or body, I would ask you to eat something just to prevent such outward marks appearing on your face as would enable people to discover that you have fasted..... Never try to pose as a pious man. A slight manifestation of virtuousness will often lead people to regard you as an ascetic of the type of the great Buddha or a friend of the sinner like Jesus or a devotee like Sri Chaitanya. A man may not have in him the faintest

trace of asceticism, yet, if he will go about with a piece of cloth on his body dyed in ochre, men will fall flat at his feet and worship him as an ascetic of the highest type who has forsaken all the pleasures of this earth for the sake of God. For, it is often the habit of men to talk of people as millionaires who have not a penny to call their own. Let neither eulogies nor detractions count for anything with you. Whatever may be your sufferings for the sake of religion, never go about recounting them at your neighbours' doors. If you are keeping a fast, stay indoors so that people may not know that you have fasted....One day we cook our own food and abstain from eating some delicious fruit, and the news at once goes abroad and appears in public print the next day, and what eulogies they bestow on us for asceticism, for devotion to God, and what not! Worshippers of the true God, be not led away by such false eulogies. Close your ears with your hands whenever words like these are uttered in your hearing.....Practise dissimulation in the exercise of virtues. Never cherish the desire to earn praise by any outward display, for display injures your own soul as also the world." Jesus himself preached this kind of hypocrisy among his disciples. He asked them to pray, to fast, to give alms and yet not let people know of it in any way. I have already observed above that what people love to cherish in their heart, they will never expose to public view in the market-place. He that has the true love of God in him, will therefore never vaunt of it in public. It manifests itself in his thought, in his words, and in his conduct. Piety or love of God is like fire. It cannot be concealed. "The devotee will be known by his eyes," says a Bengali

song. He can thus be easily discovered, though he never cares to make himself known. This is perhaps one of the reasons why *Sadhus* do not generally stay at a place for more than three days. Once, there came a *Sadhu* to this town of Barisal. For sometime he stayed on the riverside, and nobody knew who he was. He used to sing from door to door, and little boys took him for a madcap and amused themselves with him. When at length we discovered what there was in him, he refused to stay here and actually left this place in two or three days. When leaving, some one asked him why he was going. " This place has become too hot for me," said he. People had found him out and had begun to talk of him in all quarters, so he must fly from the place. True *Sadhus* do not easily reveal themselves. " An empty vessel sounds much," says a proverb. Those alone love display, who have no worth in them. Display of piety betokens an empty mind. Everyone knows the Sanskrit couplet :

> "The *Rohita* fish which lives in deep waters never makes a display of its own body as do the smaller fry which disport themselves in shallow waters."[114]

It is said of a certain Hindu Princess that she herself worshipped Rama with the utmost devotion, but her husband never took that name. This pained her much and on many occasions she entreated him to utter the name of her Beloved One, even were it only once. This the husband obstinately declined to do. One morning, the Princess was in ecstasy. She sent for her chief officer and told him, " This is a day of

114. अगाधजलसञ्चारी विकारी नैव रोहितः।
गण्डूषजलमात्रेण सफरी फरफरायते ॥

great rejoicing for me, I will not say why. Let there be great demonstrations all over the city. Let thousands of Brahmins be fed, let beggars be given alms and let there be music over the gateways of this city." The officer obeyed, and there was great *eclat* all over the city, but nobody could tell why, except that it was the pleasure of the Princess. Now, when the Prince came to behold all these rejoicings, he knew not what it was all for. And no one could tell him anything about it; they simply said that it was the order of the queen. He then came to his consort and asked her. She would not tell him but at length had to yield to his importunities and said, "You know not, my dear, how full is my heart to-day. I have now got what I longed for and what, in spite of my earnest entreaties, you never gave. For, last night in sleep you uttered the name of Rama—to me the sweetest word on earth—and uttered it several times. I am now blessed, and have ordered the festivities you see." The Prince stood still for some time with his eyes fixed steadily on his wife. "What name was it, pray, what name?" asked he. "Rama", said the Princess. "Oh," exclaimed the Prince, "the treasure so long cherished in the inmost recesses of my heart has at last been unlocked!" With this the Prince dropped down dead. The Princess was dumbfounded for, not till then did she suspect that it was a saint that she had for her husband. Paramahansa Ramakrishna used to sing:

> "Let the Darling Girl Shyama[115] be kept carefully treasured within thy bosom, O my soul. Let Her not be seen by any one save me and thee."

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115 Another name for the goddess Kali. Tr.

Says Hafiz :

> "With that Idol of thy heart, repair to some lonesome nook, there seat thyself, and take from Her kisses, fresh and fresh, to thy heart's content."

A *Bhakta* will never like to trumpet forth his piety. He retires with his God to the loneliest of all places—the depths of his heart—and there exclaims in the fulness of heart :

> "How I wish I could pass my days and my nights with Thee, my Lord, and hide Thee in the most secret chambers of my heart, away from the gaze of men ! "

But you must not suppose that because there should be no display of devotion, there should not be any religious discussion at all. Unless a man has his heart as full as that of the Prince of whom I have just spoken above, it is difficult to say whether he can keep alive what religious fervour there may be in him, without mutual exchange of thoughts among friends. But while taking part in religious discussions, we must guard against an excessive zeal for making a display of our religious sentiments.

XIII. MORAL COWARDICE

I have to deal with yet another impediment in the path of devotion before I conclude this part of my subject. It is moral cowardice which dissuades us from doing what is right, and thus gradually deprives us of all manly spirit. To what foolishness men will submit out of this cowardly spirit is beautifully illustrated by the following story told of some teacher in

one of our cities. This gentleman had an abnormal fear of what people might think of him. One day, he was drawing water out of his well when some friends came to see him. As soon as these gentlemen came near enough and asked him what he was about, he blushed at the idea of these people thinking he had no servants; he, therefore, quietly let go the water-pot with the rope into the well, and replied, "I was just looking into the well, to examine its depth." So this poor schoolmaster lost his water-pot out of moral cowardice. And this is often the case with most of us. How often we throw away all hope of spiritual benefit for the mere fear of criticism! You feel inclined to pray, or to spend some time in meditation. But the moment you are reminded that some one might taunt you or tease you for doing so, you give it up altogether.

Honesty has often to pay a heavy penalty in this world, has to suffer calumny and to meet with other difficulties. I know a young man who was a candidate for Government employment, and when he was asked to state his age he stated it to be twenty-six, although he was aware of the rule that twenty-five was the prescribed limit. Some of my friends called him a fool for having made a true statement of his age when he could as easily have made a false one. But such remarks have to be put up with by those who fear God more than man. A study of the lives of the world's greatest men will show what an amount of suffering must inevitably be the lot of those who have set before themselves the task of reform.

Jesus stood up against sin and proclaimed to men the ways of God and they killed him on the Cross.

Even this day, there are men amongst us who will abuse Sri Chaitanya as a charlatan or a libertine. Even parents have been known to devise means for turning a son from the path of virtue! Nothing could be more regrettable.

Those that are truly pious will have faith in God, and will never waver, whoever might stand against them. How sacred is the memory of those that have sanctified this earth by laying down their lives under tortures inflicted by the wicked in upholding the cause of virtue! If you want to follow their footsteps, you shall have to stake your very life, not to speak of enduring mere adverse criticism. The great Bengali devotee Rama Prasad has a song :

> "Proclaim glory unto Kali. People will say, 'the fellow has gone mad.' What of that ?"

This is the true spirit of a *Bhakta*. What is there to apprehend from adverse criticism ? Shall we give up the highest end of our being for the mere fear of an evil tongue? He that seeks the company of God, should he care for what mortals might say ? Here is a devotee who exclaims in great joy :

> "I am in love with Thee. People are calumniating us. Let them say what they will—we are doing what is right."

When Radha[116] found that her husband's sister was making a great row over her intimacies with

116. She was not the married wife of Sri Krishna but of a relative of his; and is yet always associated with him in later *Vaishnava* literature, which regards her as a part of His being. Tr.

Sri Krishna, and she could endure it no longer, she defiantly burst forth :

> "Go and proclaim to the city, if thou wilt, that I have sunk deep in the love of Sri Krishna."

This is the spirit in which you have to go forward in the path of devotion. Let people call you mad, call you a fool or a self-seeking man or throw dust at you or torture you in whatever way they like, budge not for a moment.

(i) Consider the substantial loss to yourself and also to the society at large which results from this weakness. Take the case of one of our Civil Court officers who gets a pay of Rs. 20 a month. He will not deign to do his own marketing as he thinks he will thereby degrade himself in the eyes of his people. So he keeps a servant which means at least Rs. 8 a month. And, how can he maintain a family with the balance of Rs. 12 ? He is thus compelled to stretch out his left hand whenever a suitor goes to him on business. Sometimes he calls it only a searching fee, occasionally a filing fee, at times a *nazar*, and now and then also he gives it the more honest name of a 'tip.' Many of those used to such corruption are often heard to say, 'What can I do, Sir ? Born in a respectable family, how can I do the work of a menial servant myself ? What will people say, if I don't keep a servant ? And if I must have one, how can I get on with this small pay unless I take bribes ?' One is bound to admire the intelligence of these gentlemen which induces them to sacrifice their soul for the mere fear of what people may say.

Moral cowardice often leads us to join in indecent amusements. When there is going to be a dancing per-

formance at a neighbour's place by some public women, 'How can I,' one thinks, 'remain absent, and if I do so, what will my community think of me ?' And one feels constrained to attend, even though he has perhaps on some occasions, publicly denounced the evil of attending such parties, for, thinks he, how can he afford to disoblige the friend or relation in whose house the performance takes place and who has invited him to it ? One is opposed in principle to the custom of early marriage, and yet marries his children in direct violation of that principle, for the simple reason that people will otherwise speak ill of him. In the first case, you harbour sin and perhaps also defile your heart by taking part in the immoral amusement, and in the second case, you do your children serious injury by marrying them too early. And all this, for fear of what men may think of you. Instances of moral cowardice thus causing serious loss to one's own self and also to others, may be easily multiplied.

(ii) From a study of the lives of great men, you will learn the lesson that they have always clung to whatever they have considered to be right, and never cared a straw for what others might think. The more you can realise this truth, the less there will be of moral cowardice in you. A spark of the invincible spirit they evinced in the cause of truth and religion will be enough to consume all false fears in us. We should therefore constantly study such lives.

(iii) Instances are numerous in this world of men being converted into the most zealous champions of a righteous cause after having strenuously opposed it for a long time. Truth and virtue must triumph. I have seen many who were the worst enemies of some

good men, who have at last turned to be their staunchest admirers. 'Sauls' are not infrequently changed into 'Pauls,' and 'Omar the enemy' into 'Omar the friend.'[117] Follow the history of any reform, and you will see where fathers had scoffed, sons have become the most devoted of converts. You can therefore safely trust to time to make converts of those that have nothing but an evil tongue for you to-day if the cause you are in is a righteous cause. This conviction will certainly encourage you to proceed onward in all virtuous undertakings.

But, suppose none will embrace your cause,—what then? All that is true and just, derives its sanction from God. Put then God on one side of the scales, and worldly advantages on the other—which of the sides carries the greater weight? Which would you prefer?

I have now enumerated the main obstacles to the growth of devotion and have also indicated some of the ways of removing them. All of you must have noticed that the mind has always the most important

117. A brave and handsome young man of 26, notorious for enmity to Islam and the harshness and violence with which he treated Mahomed and his earliest followers in Mecca. Once, on entering the house of his sister Fatima, he overheard the reading of the Quoran as Fatima and her husband had become converts to Islam. Omar fiercely sprang upon his sister's husband and kicked him. Fatima interposed and got hurt. The sight of his sister's bleeding face softened his heart and he asked to see what was being read. When the Quoran was brought to him, he read the passage that was being read out to his sister shortly before, and he was so deeply moved that he asked to be taken to Mahomed at once, to whom he was immediately brought and made a convert then and there. A.D. 615-616. He proved a tower of strength to Mahomed, for, from his conversion dates the public and fearless profession of the Faith in Mecca. He outlived Mahomed and, succeeding Abu Bakr in the Caliphate, left the stamp of his dauntless spirit upon Islam. See Sir William Muir's Life of Mahomed, 3rd Edition, 1894, pp. 87-89. Tr.

part to act. Bad thoughts have to be overcome by good thoughts and bad sentiments by good sentiments. Mind is the seat of the vices and it is the mind alone which can uproot them, if it will. In the *Yogavasishtha,*[118] Vasishthadeva, while explaning to Ramachandra how the mind has to control itself, says :

> "It is the mind alone that is able to control itself. O Rama, he that is not a king himself, how can he subdue other kings ?"

Those passions which are tending towards the low and the sordid have to be turned to the attainment of the high and the noble. The senses that indulge in mere external pleasures, you have to direct inward by the power of thought and you succeed in removing all internal obstacles. As in *Daksha :*[119]

> "The outward-tending senses have to be turned inward towards the mind and the mind again to the soul and the soul freed from all sensual trammels have to be fixed upon Brahman— this is contemplation and this is wisdom. The rest only goes to swell the volume of a book."

In the *Bhagavad Gita*[120] Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :

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118. मन एव समर्थः स्यात् मनसो दृढनिग्रहे ।
अराजा कः समर्थः स्यात् राज्ञो राघव निग्रहे ॥
Utpattiprakarana, Ch. XIII, Sloka 34.

119. मनस्येवेन्द्रियाण्यत्र मनस्यात्मनि योजयेत् ।
सर्वभावविनिर्मुक्तं क्षेत्रज्ञं ब्रह्मणि न्यसेत् ॥
वहिर्मुखानि सर्वाणि कृत्वा चाभिमुखानि वै ।
एतद्ध्यानं तथा ज्ञानं शेषस्तु ग्रन्थविस्तरः ॥

120. यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥
Ch. II, Sloka 58.

> "As a tortoise draws in on all sides his limbs, he withdraws his senses from the objects of sense and then is his understanding well-poised."

From this no one must conclude that all work has to be abandoned. No, only the senses have to be employed in the service of the in-dwelling Spirit :

> "He who acteth placing all actions in Brahman, abandoning attachment, is unaffected by sin, as a lotus leaf is by water."[121]

In conclusion, it is necessary to state one thing more. The vices referred to above sometimes appear in disguise. Sin often wears the garb of virtue. Satan will put on the guise of a saint and whisper evil counsel into our ears. The Devil often quotes Scriptures for his purpose. We have always to put ourselves on the strictest guard against being thus lured on into evil. Some one has done some wrong or something that is sinful and does not feel the remotest compunction for it. You consider it proper to protest against it or to punish the man. But somebody comes and says, "Pardon the man, let him alone. Things like these are of everyday occurrence, so one can't afford to chafe against them always." Is not this man sinning by counselling peace while perhaps he is deluding himself all the while with the thought that he is exercising the virtue of mercy ? It is sin which has taken possession of him in the guise of virtue. Some one is in trouble. You know he is sure to squander

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121. ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥
Srîmad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. V, Sloka 10.

any money you pay him for bad purposes, and yet you pay. You may have acted from merciful motives, but it is sin that deceives you by putting on the garments of virtue. We often act under the influence of lust or anger and then console ourselves by thinking that we have done what alone ought to have been done under the circumstances. Here again Vice is trying to put on the appearance of Virtue and seeking an introduction to you in that shape. Instances can be easily multiplied. You have to set up intelligent and ever-watchful guards in all possible corners of the heart to protect yourself against any ingenious device that may be adopted by Satan to pollute your heart.

Chapter V

AIDS TO DEVOTION

I will now discuss what measures ought to be adopted for the acquisition of *Bhakti*. He that already has *Bhakti*, what need has he for external aids ?

> " When you have the southern breeze blowing, what need is there for a fan ?"[1]

Those in whom no devotion has yet appeared should try to become जिज्ञासु or Inquisitive and अर्थार्थी or Mendicant devotees. Says Sandilya : 'Even the worst sinner is entitled to be a *Bhakta* of the 'Distressed' class. If you begin at the lowest class, you may rise to the highest. But he must be supremely fortunate who can, from the beginning, discover the seeds of रागात्मिका or अहैतुकी (*i.e.* Impassioned or Motiveless) devotion in his heart. Some will perhaps say, 'How can you *try* to become आर्त्त *i.e.* Distressed or रागात्मिका *i.e* Impassioned or अर्थार्थी *i.e.* Mendicant *Bhaktas* ? Calamities are bound to make us आर्त्त *i.e.* Distressed *Bhaktas ;* the spirit of enquiry is spontaneous in us ; and we become अर्थार्थी *i.e.* Mendicant *Bhaktas* whenever we are in need of something'. But, I ask, do we always realise calamities ? Do we always realise the fact that we are sunk deep in sin ? Where is the spirit of that enquiry which blesses the soul ? Who of us are really anxious to know the truth about God ? We are more ready to ask ourselves, 'How much have I earned ?' 'Who says this, and

1. तालवृन्तेन किं कार्यं लब्धे मलयमारु` ?

who says that against me ?' 'How are my wife and children doing ?' than questions like 'What are the attributes of God ?' 'What is our relationship with Him ?' 'What is the way to Salvation ?' How many of us really ask themselves questions of this nature ? And as regards अर्थार्थी भक्ति, do we understand what is the real object we should always keep in view ? All that we ask for is, 'Give me son, Give me riches, Give me good luck, my Goddess.' And, do we ask for that even with our whole heart ? Do we firmly believe that God listens to these prayers ?

1. SELF-EXAMINATION

is the way to the attainment of devotion of any of these kinds.

(i) We can fully realise the seriousness of our position if only we examine ourselves every day, and see how we are passing our days, how many good acts we are doing and how many bad, what progress we are making in the battle with sin. We are the most miserable beings in creation and also the most foolish. What created being is there that will, like man, thrust himself into fire knowing full well that he is sure to be burnt to death ?

"The butterfly does not know what are the pangs of death from burning, and therefore enters into the fire. The fish knows not that death lies concealed in the bait that he is going to devour. But man knows that the objects of his enjoyment are fraught with dangers to him and ruin is sure to come in the wake of enjoyment, and yet he does

not shun them. O, how mysterious is the power of Infatuation!"[2]

Do we think for a moment to what miserable plight the enjoyment of sensual pleasures has reduced us? How many rights and privileges were we born to, and what a pitiable condition are we now in! How endless is our degradation! O, how ruinous have these ephemeral pleasures proved to be! And how many are the senses that have to be gratified! The eye, the ear, the nose, the skin, the tongue—there is not a single sense which we are not doing the utmost to gratify! And the result is as ought to be:

> "The deer, the elephant, the butterfly, the bee, and the fish are losing their lives, each for the gratification of one sense. If one of the senses can do so much harm, why should he not perish who will gratify all the five senses at a time?"

Oh, how utterly we ruin ourselves by adding fuel to the fire of our passions! Each one of them, acting in its own sphere, robs us of all that we have. He that will fully realise by self-examination what misery the senses have brought upon us, will exclaim in tears:

> "See, O Immaculate, this tongue, ever so insatiable, is dragging me from one direction, the genital organ in another, the stomach in a third, and the ear, the nose, the eye, each in a

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2. अजानन् दाहार्तो विशति शलभो दीपदहनं
न मीनोऽपि ज्ञात्वावृतवडिशमश्नाति पिशितम् ।
विजानन्तोऽप्येतान् वयमिह विपज्जालजटिलान्
न मुञ्चामः कामानहह ! गहनो मोहमहिमा ॥

Shantishataka, Sloka 7.

different direction. Like co-wives, the senses are incessantly bothering me in all possible ways."

There is a strain in a Bengali song:

"The five senses have five different objects of desire. How can I manage to keep my house right?"

He that fully realises this situation and incessantly prays to God to be delivered out of it, is a real *Arta* or 'Distressed' *Bhakta*. Self-examination is the principal means of becoming an 'Inquisitive' *Bhakta*. If you retire and examine yourself a little, questions like these will occur to you, 'What am I? Whence am I come and why? Who has sent me? What is my connection with Him? Who are these parents to me? Why do they love me so dearly? Who has given me so many friends in this world? Why does fire emit heat and the wind cool my body and water quench my thirst?' Hundreds of questions like these crowd the mind and goad it on in the path of Divine wisdom. A moment's reflection will clearly bring home to our minds the existence in the universe of a Power full of love. And when once you realise this Power, the more you think of it, the more you are attracted to it and this is sure to result in devotion.

Even for a 'Mendicant' *Bhakta,* self-examination is the way. By self-examination, we shall have to ascertain what we really want. And when that is ascertained, we shall find that there is no one save He to whom we can open out our heart and whom we can ask for anything we want—beginning from a quarter of a pice and ending with the highest aim of existence —Eternal Salvation. And you will then be induced to

tell that One Being everything that you may have to say, and this is the first step to Devotion.

Not to speak of 'Distressed' or 'Mendicant' *Bhaktas* who will proceed on the lines suggested above, even those of them who will become 'Distressed' *Bhaktas* out of a fear for the ordinary dangers of life *e.g.* thieves, ferocious animals, diseases etc., or those who will be 'Mendicant' *Bhaktas* for the sake of the ordinary comforts of life, if they will begin to pray to God with a sincere heart, they will soon come to see that either their prayers are being fulfilled or they have already begun to feel that what they were praying for now appears as of no moment at all. And so in the case of *Bhaktas* who worship God with a bad motive in view. Whatever be the end in view, if you can sincerely ask for it, the way to devotion is sure to open out to you. The greatest of miscreants will, by sincere prayer, "speedily become pious and attain to eternal bliss."[3] Says the great Sri Chaitanya:

> "If any one desiring something else will worship Sri Krishna, He will give him His own feet though not asked for. He thinks, 'This man must be a great fool to worship Me and ask for earthly comforts, preferring poison to nectar. But I am wiser, and why should I give him earthly comforts? I will give him the nectarine water touched by my feet, and make him forget all earthly enjoyments.'"

In the *Srimadbhagavata*:

> "Those that have not asked for His feet,

3. क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. XI, Sloka 31.

> even them He will give His feet which fulfill all desire."[4]

Again in the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* :

> "One begins to worship Sri Krishna with some object in view and ends with being His servant, giving up the object he was seeking."

So was Dhruva who began with a desire for a throne, but having got a taste of Sri Krishna's love, a desire grew upon him to become His servant, leaving all earthly objects.

With the depth of feeling, prayer deepens into worship. You begin with a prayer for some particular end, but as attachment grows, you feel inclined to sing His praises and as you hear His praises sung, your ear is filled with joy and you look more and more for occasions to proclaim His glory. And as this inclination grows, His glory and attributes gradually reveal themselves to you and the heart leaps in joy and sings victory to Him. When the feeling grows deeper, all prayers and supplications seem as mere externals, and the only desire that is left is that of sitting by Him and looking at that charming Countenance. This is Contemplation—meditating over His attributes—silent Meditation, and nothing else. At this stage :

> "In the shrine of thy heart will reign that Beauty which is the source of all good to the world, and in speechless awe shalt thou take refuge at those blessed feet."

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4. स्वयं विधत्ते भजतामनिच्छता-
मिच्छापिधानं निजपादपल्लवम ।

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha V, Ch. XIX, Sloka 27.

And when this Love deepens, then comes utter Absorption of the human mind in the Divine Existence—a complete annihilation of the human existence as a separate entity. There is no sitting by Him any longer, you meditate and meditate and altogether lose yourself in His beauty, like the butterfly that leaps into fire and burns itself to death. Contemplation indicates two separate entities : 'There are *You*, and here am *I*.' In *Samadhi i.e.* Absorption of the mind, there is only 'Here are *you*.' The 'Ego' sinks for ever in the Divine Existence.

2. THE FIVE METHODS OF WORSHIP ACCORDING TO SRI CHAITANYA

In advising Sanatan on how to acquire devotion, Sri Chaitanya said :

> "The company of sages, the worship of Sri Krishna, study of Scriptures, taking God's name, living in Sri Vrindavan—these are the five principal modes of Divine worship. One of these five, even in a slight degree, will give rise to the love of Sri Krishna in a well-disposed mind."

Sri Rupa Goswami says the same thing in his *Bhaktirasamritasindhu*.

(A) GOOD COMPANY

Good company is as helpful in the attainment of devotion as bad company is an obstacle in its way. The *Shastras* dealing with *Bhakti* repeatedly enjoin :

> "Never keep the company of dishonest or lewd men. For, the company of those people will lead you into the dark den of hell as a blind man

can lead his blind companion only into darkness."[5]

"Evil company proves the ruin of all virtues—Truth, Purity, Kindness, Taciturnity, Intelligence, Delicacy, Prosperity, Fame, Forgivefulness, Peacefulness, Self-control and the six qualities of Dignity, Majesty, Distinction, Excellence, Beauty and Loveliness.

Never live in the company of those that have not been able to control their passions, those that are infatuated, and of those that consider the body as the essential thing."[6]

"Better live in a cage of flames than in the detestable company of those that are averse to think of God."[7]

Our religious books also loudly proclaim the glory of good company and its utility for the acquisition of *Bhakti* :

"Devotion grows in the company of *Bhaktas*."[8]

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5. सङ्गं न कुर्यादसतां शिश्नोदरतृपां क्वचित् ।
तस्यानुगस्तमस्यन्धे पतत्यन्धानुगान्धवत् ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. XXVI, Sloka 3.

6. सत्यं शौचं दया मौनं बुद्धिर्ह्रीः श्रीर्यशः क्षमा ।
शमो दमो भगश्चेति यत्सङ्गाद्याति संक्षयम् ॥
तेष्वशान्तेषु मूढेषु खण्डितात्मस्वसाधुषु ।
सङ्गं न कुर्याच्छोच्येषु योषित्क्रीडामृगेषु च ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha III, Ch. XXXI, Slokas 33, 34.

7. वरं हुतवहज्वालापञ्जरान्तर्व्यवस्थितिः ।
न शौरिचिन्ताविमुखजनसंवासवैशसम् ॥
Katyayanasamhita quoted in *Bhaktirasamritasindhu*.

8. भक्तिस्तु भगवद्भक्तसङ्गेन परिजायते ।
Brihannaradiya Purana, Ch. IV, Sloka 33.

"The sun by his rays destroys the darkness of the outside world. Pious men by their holy sayings completely destroy all darkness of the mind."[9]

Says Sri Krishna :

"In the company of sages, there goes on conversation on topics relating to My powers which is always so pleasing to the heart and to the ear. If you listen to such conversation, you will gradually acquire first an inclination and then a liking and thereafter a strong attachment towards salvation.[10]

"Your heart will not be able to touch the blessed feet of God which kill all earthly desire till you purify it by the dust of the sages' feet."[11]

But, how are *Sadhus* to be known ? Sri Krishna has thus pointed out their characteristics :

"Sages are regardless of everything. Their hearts are fixed upon Me, they are lowly in spirit and impartial to all. They have no particular attachment towards anything, have no feeling of egoism, make no distinction between sorrow and

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9. रविश्च रश्मिजालेन दिवा हन्ति बहिस्तमः।
सन्तः सूक्तिमरीच्यौघैश्चान्तर्ध्वान्तं हि सर्वदा॥

Brihannaradiya Purana, Ch. IV, Sloka 37.

10. सतां प्रसंगान्मम वीर्यसंविदो भवन्ति हृत्कर्णरसायनाः कथाः।
तज्जोषणादाश्वपवर्गवर्त्मनि श्रद्धारतिर्भक्तिरनुक्रमिष्यति॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha III, Ch. XXV, Sloka 25.

11. नेषां मतिस्तावदुरुक्रमाङ्घ्रिं स्पृशत्यनर्थापगमो यदर्थः।
महीयसां पादरजोऽभिषेकं निष्किञ्चनानां न वृणीत यावत्॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha VII, Ch. V, Sloka 32.

happiness &c., are not disposed to take from others."[12]

"Capable of suffering sorrow, having love for all created beings, without a foe, quiet and of good character."[13]

Some will say, where to get such ideal men? Very rare, no doubt. But if you will diligently look for them, you will find some at least who have specially developed these qualities in their lives. Many of us could very easily go and see Paramahansa Ramakrishna or Chaitanya Das Babaji of Navadwipa. Even in these days, I hardly think *Sadhus* are as wanting as the desire on our part to see them. It is not very difficult to see the Paohari Baba of Ghazipore or Swami Bhaskarananda[14] of Benares. Besides, *Sadhus* generally travel all over the country, and those who have the desire to see them can very easily do so whenever they like.

Even if you will not always get ideal men, you will get some who have partially realised in their lives some of the virtues mentioned above. The company of these men also will advance you a good deal in the march for spiritual progress. Whoever speaks of God with a sincere heart, we should take the dust of his feet. His company is sure to impart its hue to our character.

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12. सन्तोऽनपेक्षा मच्चित्ताः प्रणताः समदर्शनाः।
निर्ममा निरहंकारा निर्द्वन्द्वा निष्परिग्रहाः॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, XXVI, Sloka 27.

13. तितिक्षवः कारुणिकाः सुहृदः सर्वदेहिनां।
अजातशत्रवः शान्ताः साधवः साधुभूषणाः॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha III, Ch. XXV, Sloka 21.

14. Both since dead. Tr.

The deliverance of Jagai and Madhai from the sinful life they were leading, affords a striking example of what the company of *Sadhus* can do. Narada, who was the son of a maid-servant, was employed by his master in looking after the comforts of some *Sadhus*. He thus relates to Vyasadeva the effect of the *Sadhus'* company :

> "With the permission of those Brahmins, I used to eat the leavings of their meal, and all my sins disappeared thereby. My heart being thus purified, there grew up in me a desire for worshipping God.
>
> "By their grace, I was permitted to listen to the sweet songs about Sri Krishna's doings which they daily chanted and, as I fondly listened to them, there grew up in me a desire for God.
>
> "Thus in the autumn and in the rainy season, morning, noon and evening, did I listen to the faultless glory of Hari sung by the high-souled sages, and this gave rise to devotion in me—devotion which dispels all the ignoble sentiments of the heart."[15]

When Haridasa[16] the great *Bhakta*, was engaged

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15. उच्छिष्टलेपानतुमोदितोद्विजैः सकृत् स्म भुञ्जे तदपास्तकिल्विषः ।
एवं प्रवृत्तस्य विशुद्धचेतसस्तद्धर्म एवात्मरुचिः प्रजायते ॥
तत्रान्वहं कृष्णकथाः प्रगायतामनुग्रहेणाशृणवं मनोहराः ।
ताः श्रद्धया मेऽनुपदं विशृण्वतः प्रियश्रवस्यङ्ग ममाभवद्रुचिः॥
इत्थं शरत्प्रावृषिकावृतू हरेर्विशृण्वतोमेऽनुसवं यशोऽमलं ।
संकीर्त्यमानं मुनिभिर्महात्मभिर्भक्तिः प्रवृत्तात्मरजस्तमोपहा ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha I, Ch. V, Slokas 25, 26, 28.

16. One of Sri Chaitanya's most devoted followers, is said to have been a Brahmin by birth but brought up in a Mahomedan family. Tr.

in his devotions in the forests of Benapole, Ramachandra Khan employed a woman of the town for the purpose of seducing him from his ascetic ways. The woman went and sat every day at Haridasa's door and expected that, as soon as his devotions would be finished, she would come in and ruin him. But Haridasa passed the whole night in singing God's name and the woman was at length obliged to go back. Two nights thus wore off, and on the third before the day broke, the woman was completely mastered, and she fell at Haridasa's feet, bitterly weeping and begging him to deliver her out of her countless sins. In that auspicious morning, the life of the woman declared the glory of good company for, the vicious woman once despised by society,

> "became a pious *Vaishnava* whose name spread in all directions as a holy saint and the best of *Vaishnavas* came to her place to have a sight of her."

I am myself a living witness to the glories of good company. Many will readily bear testimony to the spiritual awakening brought on by Paramahansa Ramakrishna in their lives.

Where *Sadhus* are not available, friends should assemble and hold discussions on Divine topics, which is as good as good company. It advances you a good deal in the way of spiritual progress.

(B) "KRISHNA SEVA" OR THE WORSHIP OF SRI KRISHNA

This term *Krishnaseva* has a wide significance. Sri Chaitanya, while enumerating the five principal modes of worship, calls it "devoutly worshipping the

Divine Image." That the worship of the Divine Image really leads to *Bhakti* can be illustrated by many examples. Sri Chaitanya surely referred to Sri Krishna but, in whatever form you worship God, you may eventually attain *Bhakti.* Rama Prasada, Raja Ramakrishna, and Paramahansa Ramakrishna were all worshippers of the Goddess Kali. Paramahansa Ramakrishna went on worshipping that goddess till he was blessed with *Bhakti.* And when he reached this stage, "he used at times to garland the goddess with sweet scented flowers and at times to place on her lotus-like feet *Java* flowers with *Vilva* leaves and sank deep in joy. On such occasions, he used to sing songs composed by Ramaprasada, Kamalakanta or Nareshchandra and other worshippers of the goddess. At times, with hands folded, he used to cry out, 'O my Mother, be kind to me. If Thou wert so merciful to Ramaprasada, why shouldst not Thou be so to me? I am not versed in the *Shastras,* I am not a learned man, nor do I care to be one. Tell me, Mother, if Thou shalt reveal Thy graces unto me. Life has become unbearable. Be revealed unto me. I do not want the eight sorts of preternatural achievements.[17] I crave not for honour, either. I have no wish for temporal fame. All that I solicit is a sight of Thy face.'" How sweet, how very noble! The worship of the goddess Kali filled him with *Bhakti* of the most selfless type, surging through his heart like the holy stream of the Ganges. Ramaprasada also, overpowered with this feeling, exclaimed :

"Thyself and Thy consort[18] are both mad.

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17. See Dr. Rajendralal Mitra's *Yoga* aphorisms of Patanjali, pp. 121, 157, 158. Tr.

18. The God Siva. Tr.

There is yet another who has run mad after Thy feet, and that one is Ramaprasada."

Raja Ambarisha affords the best example of how *Bhakti* can be attained by worshipping the Divine Image :

" He devoted his soul to the contemplation of the lotus-like feet of Sri Krishna, his voice to singing the praises of *Vaikuntha* (Heaven), his hands to the cleansing of the temple of Hari and his ears to hearing holy discourses on the nature and attributes of the Immaculate.

" He employed his eyes in seeing the temple of God, his body in touching the bodies of the servants of God, his nose in smelling the ***Tulasi*** leaves offered at His feet.

" And his feet in walking over the yard round Hari's temple, his head in prostrating before the feet of that God. What comforts he knew, he enjoyed not for the pleasure they gave him, but as evidence of the fact that he was a slave of Him whose name is Good. It was so with him because he loved the company of *Bhaktas*.

"Home, wife, son, friends, elephants, chariots, horses, soldiers, inexhaustible jewellery, arms and unlimited treasures, none of these had any attraction for him.[19]

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19. स वै मनः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोर्वचांसि वैकुण्ठगुणानुवर्णने ।
करौ हरेर्मन्दिरमार्जनादिषु श्रुतिञ्चकाराच्युतसत्कथोदये ॥
मुकुन्दलिङ्गालयदर्शने दृशौ तद्भृत्यगात्रस्पर्शेऽङ्गसङ्गं ।
घ्राणञ्च तत्पादसरोजसौरभे श्रीमत्तुलस्यारसनां तदर्पिते ॥
पादौ हरेः क्षेत्रपदानुसर्पणे शिरो हृषीकेशपदाभिवन्दने ।
कामञ्च दास्ये नतु कामकाम्यया यथोत्तमः श्लोकजनाश्रया रतिः ॥

The sublimest form of devotion was thus gradually attained, and his heart remained fixed upon Hari.

There was a man named Ramakrishna in our village who was a priest for washermen. He had a household deity of the name of Rajarajeswara (King of Kings) whom he worshipped with daily offerings. Ramakrishna had by this worship gradually attained *Bhakti.* One day, about noon, I heard many voices singing hymns at his house. 'There must be some great festivity going on in that house,' thought I, and went there to see what the matter was. I will never forget what I saw then. A granddaughter of Ramakrishna's was lying on the bare ground in front of the temple, and a number of men were circumambulating the shrine and loudly singing God's name. Ramakrishna's eyes were flooded with tears. Sometimes he was singing with the party, and sometimes, coming to the girl, he was giving her something to eat out of the food offered to the deity, and with hands folded in devotion, was repeatedly making entreaties to the god: 'I beseech Thee, take her away this moment, if she must be taken. Let it be before the *Sankirtana* is over, for this place is holy as Sri Brindavan[20] just now. What was my wonder to hear that the girl had got cholera, and all this was being done for her! The girl was taken back into a room after several hours' *Sankirtana.* In the afternoon, Ramakrishna came and informed us that the girl had completely recovered.

गृहेषु दारेषु सुतेषु बन्धुषु द्विपोत्तमस्यन्दनवाजिपत्तिषु ।
अक्षय्यरत्नाभरणायुधादिष्वनन्तकोशेष्वकरोदसम्मतिम् ।।

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha IX, Ch. IV, Slokas 18-20, 27.

20. Sri Krishna's boyhood home on the Jumna. Tr.

Customary worship, burnt offerings, etc., are aids to the attainment of *Bhakti* in the case of simple-hearted worshippers. To those who do not believe in worship through images, or whose religious views are opposed to that form of worship, '*Krishnaseva*' would mean realisation of the Divine presence in Nature, and the contemplation of God as manifested in Nature. Who is there that will look upon this wonderful workmanship of the world's Author and the way in which He is constantly revealing Himself in Nature, and will not be lost in admiration of that Supreme Being! The great Hindu Rishis of old realised the various manifestations of His power in Nature and worshipped it under the diverse appellations of Indra, Varuna, Sun, Fire, Water, etc. The *Vedas* are filled with hymns to this Power as revealed in Nature. He that will follow the footsteps of those great sages of old, and earnestly apply himself to study the manifestations of the Divine Being in creation, is sure to be blest with true *Bhakti*. Among the *Sadhus* of the western world, I know of none who more thoroughly realised God in Nature than the great poet Wordsworth. How he reached God through Nature is clear from the glorious picture of the Wanderer in his 'Excursion':

He beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.

In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Wrapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him; it was blessedness and love.

Wordsworth's soul thus completely merged in that great Being, as he studied Him in nature.

The Arya Rishis of old had so thoroughly realised God in Nature that they came to regard her as His stupendous image. The following is one of the principal means for the realisation of God as enumerated in the *Srimadbhagavata*:

"Bow to the sky, to air, to fire, to water, to the earth, to the luminaries (in the sky), to all created beings, to the four quarters of the globe, and to trees, rivers and seas, considering them as the embodiment of God."[21]

May we realise that all Nature, animate or inanimate,

"imitates that Refulgent Being, and reflects His light alone.[22]

"Hari dwelleth in water and in land, in the sun and in the moon, in fire and in air, and this world is interpenetrated by Him."

May we, in voice choked with overpowering devotion, say this to our God :

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21. खं वायुमग्निं सलिलं महीं च ज्योतींषि सत्त्वानि दिशो द्रुमादीन्।
सरित्समुद्रांश्च हरेः शरीरं यत्किञ्च भूतं प्रणमेदनन्यः ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Sloka 48.

22. तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति।
Kathopanishad, Valli V, Sloka 15.

"As there is only one sun who with his myriad rays lights up the whole face of this universe, so is Thy love manifested in a hundred different forms, in the devotion of a wife to her husband, and in the affection of a mother for her son.

"The mountain piercing the clouds, or the deep blue ocean, go wherever I may, lo, there Thou art. In the sun's light is Thy bright effulgence, in the moon is Thy splendour, and in the clouds is Thy beauty. A crowded city or a lonely forest, wherever I go, there Thou art."[23]

(C) "BHAGAVATA" OR STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The study of Scripture is a great help to devotion. Books discussing God's attributes, which relate His glories or recount His powers, or which are replete with accounts of the life-stories of *Bhaktas*, help you a great deal in the attainment of devotion. Sri Chaitanya has therefore named *Bhagavata* or the study of Scriptures as one of the greatest aids to devotion. The history of the world and the sciences all reveal and record the glories of God, and arouse devotion. They may, therefore, be well regarded as included in the term *Bhagavata*. Galen, the well-known scientist, had at first no faith in God, but as he studied Physiology and saw how wonderful the mechanism of the human frame is, with what skill the arteries and the nerves, the bones and the muscles, are set in the making of that frame, his heart was filled with the greatest admiration for God, he turned a devotee and

23. From a Bengali song. Tr.

wrote a beautiful book in celebration of His glories. Scriptures can, to some extent, supply the want of good company to those that lack it.

(D) TAKING GOD'S NAME

To sing the name of God or to hear it sung or to repeat it to yourself greatly aids the culture of devotion. I know of none who has so forcibly dwelt on the efficacy of the chanting of God's name as Gouranga. He has repeatedly enjoined :

> "Hari's name, Hari's name, Hari's name alone ; in *Kali Yuga,* there is no other way out."[24]

In counselling Subuddhi Roy as to how he should free himself from sins, he says :

> "Once you take that name, all your sin vanishes. You repeat it a second time and Sri Krishna is yours."

Haridasa, one of Sri Chaitanya's disciples, was one day discussing the virtue of God's name with some learned men :

> "Some one says, 'the name of God does away with our sins' ; another says, 'it leads to salvation' ; Haridasa says, 'That is not so.' The name of Sri Krishna excites love towards Him. The destruction of sin or the emancipation of soul is only a secondary result, as when you see the sun you see everything else on the earth, and darkness vanishes."

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24. हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ।।

The *Kali Yuga* is the present age, which is full of sinfulness. Tr.

Kavi, the son of Rikhava, addressing Janaka, says :

> "He that has made it the occupation of his life to sing the name of his dear God, by such singing conceives love for Him, his heart melts, and he now bursts into loud laughter and now weeps, and at times cries out and sings or dances, like one that is gone mad ; he is not like an ordinary mortal."[25]

The singing of God's name destroys all sin and inspires divine love. As in *Padyavali* :

> "The name which takes away the sin of the world, and which is like a vessel that carries us safe across the sea of darkness, glory to that Name of Hari, the blessing of the world !"[26]

And again :

> "The singing of hymns to Sri Krishna cleanses the mirror of the heart, quenches the great wildfire of unholy passions, opens out the good that is in us, as the moonlight does the water-lily. It is the soul of that divine wisdom which hides itself like a newly-married bride in the secret recesses of the heart. It is the very flood-tide of the sea of human joys, every syllable is full of ambrosial flavour. It bathes the soul in

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25. एवंव्रतः स्वप्रियनामकीर्तने जातानुरागो द्रुतचित्त उच्चैः ।
हसत्यथ रोदिति रौति गायत्युन्मादवन्नृत्यति लोकबाह्यः ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Sloka 40.

26. अंहः संहरेदखिलं सकृदुदयादेव सकललोकस्य ।
तरणिरिव तिमिरजलधेर्जयति जगन्मङ्गलं हरेर्नाम ॥
Padyavali.

delight. All glory to it!"[27]

There can hardly be anything more delightful than for friends to meet daily at a time, to sing the name of God. It fills the heart with joy, and peace reigns over the mind and all worldly desires vanish for the time. And, if you carry on this practice and make it a habit of life, you are sure to gain the *Summum Bonum* of human existence.

Gouranga thus taught his disciples how the name of God has to be sung:

> "Humbler than the grass, more patient than the tree, not caring for honour from others, yet honouring all, sing always the name of Hari."[28]

While singing His name, direct your attention to that attribute of God which is implied by the particular name you select. Else, hardly any good will come out of the singing. Let it not be for mere amusement, for, then it will never do any real good to the soul.

If you are going to practise the repeating of God's name, fully acquaint yourself with the meaning and virtue of the name you select. This is essentially necessary. As in *Mahanirvanatantra*:[29]

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27. चेतोदर्पणमार्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्वापणम्
श्रेयः कैरवचन्द्रिकावितरणं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ॥
आनन्दाम्बुदवर्द्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनम्
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसंकीर्त्तनम् ॥
Padyavali.

28. तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानवेन कीर्त्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥

29. मन्त्रार्थं मन्त्रचैतन्यं यो न जानाति साधकः ।
शतलक्षप्रजप्तोऽपि तस्य मन्त्रो न सिध्यति ॥
Ullasa III, Sutra 31.

> "If the worshipper does not realise the meaning and the virtues of the *Mantra* he utters, it would be absolutely futile for him, were he to chant it ten millions of times."

Initiation by a worthy *Guru* is a great aid to spiritual advancement and he that finds a truly worthy preceptor is a fortunate man indeed. And he that does not find such a one should select that name of God which he likes best and should earnestly practise repeating it, for God always finds a fit *Guru* for an earnest soul.

The Rishis have pointed out how this *Japa* or repetition of God's name has to be done :

> "*Om* is the bow, self the arrow and Brahma is the aim ; and this aim has to be hit with a composed mind. And then, as the arrow fixes itself in the target, so does the soul fix itself in Brahma."[30]

The mind must be composed for *Japa*. Speaking of the efficacy of *Japa*, Manu says :

> "Loud repetition of God's name is ten times superior to ceremonial sacrifices, indistinct repetition a hundred times, and mental repetition a thousand times.
>
> "A Brahmin certainly may achieve emancipation, the object of his desire, by *Japa* alone, whether he performs sacrifices or not. A Brahmin is known by his universal love."[31]

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30. प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥

Mundakopanishad, Mandal II, Sloka 4.

31. विधियज्ञाज्जंपयज्ञो विशिष्टो दशभिर्गुणैः ।
उपांशुः स्याच्छतगुणः साहस्रो मानसः स्मृतः ॥

The parts of the day best suited for *Japa* are :

(1) *Brahma Muhurta* or the period sacred to Brahma, *i.e.*, an hour preceding day-break. Devotees prefer this best. Saintly Mussulman poets say that at this time the morning breeze brings messages from the Most High to His devotees, and they send back their messages to Him.

(2) Nightfall.

(3) Midnight.

The following are the best places for *Japa* according to the *Kularnavatantra* :

> Some place of pious memory, the side of a river, a cave, the top of a hill, places of pilgrimage, confluence of rivers, some sacred forest, a lonely garden, the foot of a *Vilva* tree or of a hill, a shrine, the beach of the sea, one's own house, or any place where one feels well at ease."[32]

According to the same authority, places where there are persons opposed to godliness, bad characters, rapacious animals or snakes, are unfavourable for the purpose. We all understand why these places are prohibited.

जप्येनैव तु संसिध्येद् ब्राह्मणो नात्र संशयः।
कुर्यादन्यन्न वा कुर्यान्मैत्रो ब्राह्मण उच्यते॥

Manusamhita, Ch. II, Slokas 85, 87.

32. पुण्यक्षेत्रं नदीतीरं गुहा पर्वतमस्तकं।
तीर्थप्रदेशाः सिन्धूनां सङ्गमः पावनं वनम्॥
उद्यानानि विविक्तानि बिल्वमूलं तटं गिरेः।
देवतायतनं कूलं समुद्रस्य निजं गृहम्॥
साधनेषु प्रशस्तानि स्थानान्येतानि मन्त्रिणां।
अथवा निवसेत्तत्र यत्र चित्तं प्रसीदति॥

Kularnavatantra.

Kavira realised in his life the efficacy of earnest *Japa* :

> "Kavira saying 'Thou' 'Thou' has become 'Thee', and is not in 'Me.' Glory to Thy name! Whichever side I look, there art 'Thou.'"

And again,

> "Kavira saying 'Thou' 'Thou' has become 'Thee,' is merged in Thee. Thou and I are now one, and the mind no longer turns away from Thee."

This is the blessed condition which the devotee attains by *Japa*. He sinks his personality in the Divine Being, sees nothing around him but His alone, and the whole universe appears to him a manifestation of God.

(E) LIVING IN A SACRED PLACE

Visiting some holy place or dwelling there awakens feelings of devotion. What is it that gives a holy place its sanctity?

> "Some extraordinary virtue of the land or the water, or the abode of saints makes it a holy place."[33]

The flames flashing forth from the hillside at Jwalamukhi, the fountain of hot water at Sitakunda, the snow-capped peaks of Kedarnath, and the lovely stream of the Ganges at Hardwar—who can look upon these with a heart that will not melt in devotion to their great Author? And who is there, again, that

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33. प्रभावादद्भुताद्भूमेः सलिलस्य च तेजसा ।
परिग्रहान्मुनीनाञ्च तीर्थानां पुण्यता स्मृता ॥

Kashikhanda.

can visit Brindavan and think of Sri Krishna, go to Navadwipa and be reminded of the doings of Gouranga, repair to Budh Gaya and sit at the root of the great *Bodhi* tree, and in Ayodhya look at the remains of Rama's glory, without being moved by godly sentiments ? And, why speak of sacred memories alone ? Remember how many have resorted to these holy places, and returned blest because of the company of devotees they enjoyed there.

3. SELF-DEDICATION

A very great aid to devotion has thus been explained in the *Srimadbhagavata :*

> "Whatever you do with your body, words, mind, senses, intelligence, soul or whatever comes of your nature, resign it all to the supreme being."[34]

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the *Srimad bhagavadgita :*[35]

> "Whatever you do and eat and sacrifice and give and practise as austerities—resign all to Me."

I have now mentioned to you some of the principal aids to devotion. Let me conclude this chapter by citing what Sri Krishna said to Uddhava on this subject :

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34. कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृतेः स्वभावात् ।
करोति यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयेत्तत् ॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Sloka 36.

35. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥
Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. IX, Sloka 27.

"Those who listen with respect to all discourses about Myself, always sing my name, earnestly worship Me and chant hymns in My praise, serve Me heartily, make salutations to Me with the entire body prostrate, shew special regard for My *Bhaktas*, perceive Me in all created things, move their limbs for Me, utter words for My glorification, devote their minds to Me, abandon all other desires, eschew money, pleasure and all comforts, and direct all their sacrifices, gifts, ceremonies, prayers and vows towards Me, and thus entirely resign themselves to Me, do, by such exercises, attain *Bhakti* towards Me. What else is left for them to desire ?[36]

4. CONCENTRATION OF MIND

This is indispensable to all modes of divine worship and success is impossible without it. A wandering mind is the greatest hindrance to devotion. It prevents self-examination by diverting thought. Most of us have experienced this very often in life. You sit by some saintly individual and listen

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36. श्रद्धामृतकथायां मे शश्वन्मदनुकीर्त्तनं ।
परनिष्ठा च पूजायां स्तुतिभिः स्तवनं मम ।।
आदरः परिचर्यायां सर्वाङ्गैरभिवन्दनम् ।
मद्भक्तपूजाभ्यधिका सर्वभूतेषु मन्मतिः ।।
मदर्थेष्वङ्गचेष्टा च वचसा मद्गुणेरणं ।
मय्यर्पणं च मनसः सर्वकामविवर्जनम् ।।
मदर्थेऽर्थपरित्यागो भोगस्य च सुखस्य च ।
इष्टं दत्तं हुतं जप्तं मदर्थं यद् व्रतं तपः ।।
एवं धर्मैर्मनुष्याणामुद्धवात्मनिवेदिनाम् ।
मयि संजायते भक्तिः कोऽन्योर्थेऽस्यावशिष्यते ।।

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. XIX, Slokas 20-24.

to some holy discourse, the mind runs off and wanders into the commonest trivialities of your domestic concerns, and the sage's words vanish into thin air. These are matters of daily experience to all of us. You have begun to take God's name, and the beads are turning on your fingers and your lips are moving as usual, but where is the mind?—engaged, I am afraid, in collecting rents from some tenants. You join in a *Sankirtana* party, and the *Sankirtana* is in full swing and your friends are all deeply moved by the songs, but your mind goes about gathering materials for some litigation. You are listening to the splendid evening service in the great temple of *Govindaji* in Sri Brindavan and your heart is moved by the deepest sentiments of devotion, when, lo, the mind goes out of the scene altogether and is busy making arrangements about the re-excavation of a tank in the inner compound of your dwelling house. You invoke God before you go to bed. He comes, but where are you ?—probably, making a great row with your co-sharers over the possession of a mere tamarind tree. A wandering imagination thus proves a great obstacle to spiritual progress.

The remedies that I have suggested above will, if steadily practised for some time, tend to subdue the erratic tendencies of the mind. The great sage Patanjali has laid down eight remedies for this evil :

> "(1) For the prevention of these distractions, let there be a constant application of the mind to a selected principle."[37]

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37. तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः ।

Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Sutra 32.

The translation of this and the following Sutras is taken from Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra's work. Tr.

By continually attempting to fix your attention on the same subject day after day, you train yourself up in habits of concentration and distractions of the mind consequently subside.

> "(2) For the happy, friendliness ; for those in distress, mercy ; for the virtuous, complacence ; for the wicked, a feeling of indifference should be practised. And, this will bring on cheerfulness of the mind."[38]

Anger, spite and such other feelings distract the mind. Love, mercy, etc. drive away all bitterness of spirit and bring on cheerfulness of disposition, and are therefore conducive to concentration.

> "(3) Expulsion of air from the lungs or retention of the breath for a time."[39]

This is the process known as *Pranayama*. The sense-organs have the nerves for their vehicle. Cerebrations and vital functions being adjusted in reference to each other, one must first subdue the senses and then bring the vital functions under control. The result is concentration of the mind. The practice of *Pranayama*, however, requires a *Guru*, a guide, without whom it may produce baneful consequences, if attempted.

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38. मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःख-
पुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम् ।

Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Sutra 34.

39. प्रच्छर्द्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य ।

Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Sutra 33.

"(4) Cognition resulting from sensuous objects may be the cause of steadiness of the mind."[40]

"The purport is that in the act of *Pranayama* when the *yogi* directs his mind to the tip of the nose, etc., he derives in the places mentioned a sense of those objects which is ordinarily acquired by their natural organs and his mind settles down into the undisturbed contemplation of the object to which he directs his mind." Those that have studied *yoga* will understand what this means.

(5) The mind becomes steady when it is totally griefless and full of refulgence.

(6) Or, when all longing for sensuous objects has disappeared from it.[41]

(7) Recollection or consciousness of a sleep or dream is favourable to steadiness of the mind.

(8) Or, meditation according to one's fancy.[42]

Thought of what is gratifying will help concentration. Fix your thought upon the lovely moon outside or on the plexus of nerves within the body, and the mind will become steady. One always likes to

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40. विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना स्थितिनिबन्धनी ।
Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Sutra 35.

41. विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती ।
वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम् ।
Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Sutras 36-37.

42. स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानावलम्बनं वा ।
यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा ।
Patanjali Yogasutra, Pada I, Slokas 38-39.

think of some thing that is dear to the heart. Constant meditation upon some object of your choice will help concentration. But beware of objects of voluptuous attraction, for they only distract and do not steady the mind.

You acquire the habit of concentration by thinking over some object of pure love. Here is a beautiful illustration in point. A boy once came to a preceptor to learn the *Vedas*. The preceptor found out that the boy's mind wandered away from the lessons and the teacher asked him why he was so absent-minded. "I have a dear buffalo, Sir, and I cannot but think of it whenever I sit down at lesson," was the pupil's humble reply. The preceptor then asked his pupil to discontinue his studies for a time, and do nothing but think of his dear buffalo. The pupil obeyed, and thought of nothing day and night but of his favourite animal. Sometime after, the teacher was one day sitting in a room which had a small door in it, and he called out to his pupil who was on the other side of the door and asked him to come over for his lessons. The pupil came and the teacher found that the boy was not in a proper frame of mind yet to begin lesson, and therefore asked him to continue in his favourite reflection. Some more days passed and the preceptor was again sitting in the same room and the pupil also on the other side of the doorway. And the teacher called to him to come and begin lessons. "But," said the boy, "how can I come to you? My horns will not pass through this narrow door." The preceptor saw that the boy had now completely lost himself in the buffalo and that his mind had thus become steady, and he said "Come,

come, I will see that your horns may not stick." The boy came, and the lessons began. Constant reflection upon his favourite buffalo had given him a perfect training in habits of concentration, and he soon became an eminent Vedic scholar.

Trataka, or steadily fixing the eye upon something, is one of the principal means of acquiring concentration.

In conclusion, it is necessary to say one word more about the culture of devotion. One must not think that a successful application of the means suggested above gives him a right to see God or that any one can win Him by the exercise of his own powers alone. Nothing that man can do is sufficient, for, is not man's capacity, however great, extremely limited ? But our hope lies in the fact that God always offers Himself to one that is truly devoted to Him. Yasoda, the mother of Sri Krishna, once tried to tie up the naughty boy with a piece of rope. The rope was found short by two inches. She brought in more rope, and yet, two inches more was needed. She then brought together all the ropes she had in the house, and, what wonder, they still fell two inches short. With her best efforts, she failed to bind the boy. Yasoda then began to wonder what it meant. And then,

> " Sri Krishna moved with pity at the sight of his mother's struggle, her body perspiring and the flower-garland wound round her braided hair falling loose, he gave himself up to be bound.
>
> " Sri Krishna thus showed that although this universe and its lord Brahma (the creator of the

world) were under His control and He was under the control of none, yet He always surrendered Himself to whosoever served Him."[43]

No one can, either by the exercise of his powers or by steadfast worship and austerities, win God. The Lord offers Himself to those alone who have offered themselves to Him.

He is deluded who thinks he can attain God by any of those means. He who works on, humbly considering all his endeavours worthless as straw, and believes he will not get Him except through His grace alone, he only gets Him. The great God looks into the earnestness of his soul, and blesses him with His Grace.

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43. स्वमातुः स्विन्नगात्राया विस्रस्तकबरिस्रजः ।
दृष्ट्वा परिश्रमं कृष्णः कृपयासीत् स्वबन्धने ॥
एवं संदर्शिता ह्यङ्ग हरिणा भृत्यवश्यता ।
स्ववशेनापि कृष्णेन यस्येदं सेश्वरं वशे ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha X, Ch. IX, Slokas 18, 19.

Chapter VI

THE STAGES OF DEVOTION AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A DEVOTEE

Not to speak of those blessed few to whom God in His mercy unexpectedly revealeth Himself, ordinary people like ourselves should adopt special measures for the attainment of devotion. I have already discussed how seeds are to be sown. I will now proceed to show how the fruits are matured and explain the features that gradually develop themselves in the life of a devotee.

In the *Srimadbhagavata,* we find the sage Habi, son of Rikhava dividing devotees into three classes—Good, Intermediate, and Ordinary :

> "The Odinary are those that worship God in the form of an idol, but do not worship His devotees or any one else."[1]

Among those that have no faith in image-worship, a devotee of this class (Ordinary) will be one that has just learnt to have some regard for God's name and for His worship, but has none for His devotees. They are certainly devotees of an inferior type. People of this description rarely, if ever, hesitate to commit a sinful act whenever it serves their interest to do so. Charity is yet a virtue to be learnt, there is abundance of pride in the heart and specially a spirit of revenge. Anger, Greed, and Infatuation are all these, only a slight re-

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1. अर्चयामेव हरये पूजां यः श्रद्धयेहते ।
न तद्भक्तेषु चान्येषु स भक्तः प्राकृतः स्मृतः ।।
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Sloka 47.

gard for God. The field is a little prepared—that is all.

The following are the characteristics of a devotee of the Intermediate type :

> "He that has love for God, friendly feelings for His devotees, sympathy for ignorant people, and indifference for enemies, is a devotee of this class."[2]

The mind has advanced a good deal on the line. What was a mere regard for God has ripened into attachment. There is a liking for the company of His devotees where there was none before, hatred for the ignorant has given place to sympathy, and the bitterest feelings of spite and revenge for enemies have now softened down to mere disapprobation of their conduct. But the man has not yet learnt to look upon all with an equal eye. The flood of devotion has not yet swept over the heart.

Here is a Good devotee :

> "He who does not distinguish between self and others, makes no distinction between his own property and that of others, does not treat others' property in a manner different from his own, has an equal regard for all created beings, and who has brought his mind and passions under control, is the best of devotees.
>
> "He that realises the manifestation of Divine powers in creation and looks upon all created

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2. ईश्वरे तदधीनेषु बालिशेषु द्विषत्सु च ।
प्रेममैत्रीकृपोपेतः यः करोति स मध्यमः ।।

Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Sloka 46.

things as having their existence in God, is the best of devotees.[3]

" He who takes all that happens in the world to be an illusion created by Vishnu and even while he enjoys all that can be perceived by the senses, neither exults nor grieves over them, is the best of devotees.

" He who, remembering Hari, is not overpowered by fear, birth, death, hunger, thirst or suffering which attend the body senses, mind and intelligence, and which are the incidents of life on this earth, belongs to the foremost rank of the devotees.

" He whose mind never gives rise to acts that are done with a worldly desire, who entirely relies upon Vasudeva (*Sri Krishna*) as his sole stay, is the best of devotees.[4]

" He that never prides himself upon superiority of birth, race, work, caste or stage of life, is dear to God.

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3. न यस्य स्वः पर इति वित्तेष्वात्मनि वा भिदा ।
सर्वभूतसमः शान्तः स वै भागवतोत्तमः ॥
सर्वभूतेषु यः पश्येद्भगवद्भावमात्मनः ।
भूतानि भगवत्यात्मन्येष भागवतोत्तमः ॥
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Slokas 52, 54.

4. गृहीत्वापीन्द्रियैरर्थान्यो न द्वेष्टि न हृष्यति ।
विष्णोर्मायामिदं पश्यन् स वै भागवतोत्तमः ॥
देहेन्द्रियप्राणमनोधियां यो जन्माप्ययक्षुद्भयतर्षकृच्छ्रैः ।
संसारधर्मैरविमुह्यमानः स्मृत्या हरेर्भागवतप्रधानः ॥
न कामकर्मबीजानां यस्य चेतसि सम्भवः ।
वासुदेवैकनिलयः स वै भागवतोत्तमः ॥
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. II, Slokas 48-50

"He is the foremost among Vaishnavas who does not remove his heart, even for the twinkling of an eye, from the feet of that God who is sought by the gods, though he were offered all the riches of the three worlds.

"How can worldly desires find a place in that heart which has been purged of lust and the other desires of the world by the light that is shed out of the finger-nails of the All-powerful Hari's feet? Once the moon is up, can the sun's rays oppress us?[5]

"He is known as the best of devotees who has so fastened himself by ties of love to the feet of Hari that He can never forsake him—Hari, whose name kills all sin, even if uttered unconsciously."[6]

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"He who beareth no ill-will to any being, who is friendly, compassionate, without attach-

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5. न यस्य जन्मकर्मभ्यां न वर्णाश्रमजातिभिः।
सज्जतेऽस्मिन्नहंभावो देहे वै स हरेः प्रियः॥
त्रिभुवनविभवहेतवेऽप्यकुण्ठ-
स्मृतिरजितात्म सुरादिभिर्विमृग्यात्।
न चलति भगवत्पदारविन्दा
ल्लव निमिषार्द्धमपि यः स वैष्णवाग्र्यः॥
भगवत उरुविक्रमांघ्रिशाखानखमणिचन्द्रिकया निरस्ततापे।
हृदि कथमुपसीदतां पुनः स प्रभवति चन्द्र इवोदितेऽर्कतापः॥
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, II, Slokas 51, 53,54.

6. विसृजति हृदयं न यस्य साक्षाद्धरिरवशाभिहितोप्यघौघनाशः।
प्रणयरसनया धृतांघ्रिपद्मः स भवति भागवतप्रधान उक्तः॥
Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Chapter II, Sloka 55.

ment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, seeking union with Me, forgiving, ever content, self-controlled, resolute, with mind and reason dedicated to Me, My devotee, is dear to Me.[7]

"He from whom the world doth not shrink away, and who shrinketh not from the world, freed from the perturbations of joy, anger and fear, he is dear to Me.[8]

"He who wants nothing, pure, active, passionless, untroubled, renouncing all desires, my devotee, is dear to Me.

"He who neither loveth nor envieth, neither grieveth nor desireth, taketh good and evil consequences equally, my devotee, he is dear to Me.

"Alike to foe and friend, and also in fame and ignominy, in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, destitute of attachment.[9]

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7. अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ।।
सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ।।
Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. XII, Slokas 13, 14.

8. यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ।।

9. अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ।।
यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ।।
समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ।।
Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. XII, Slokas 15-18.

"He to whom praise and censure are equal, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, my devotee, that man is dear to Me."[10]

"Verily, those who partake of this life-giving wisdom taught herein, who are endowed with faith, and regard Me as their supreme object, they are surpassing dear to Me.[11]

The highest feature of a devotee's character has been thus described by Sri Krishna himself while addressing Uddhava on the subject :

"Those pious and sedate men who are solely devoted to Me, desire nothing, not even freedom from re-birth, offered by Myself."[12]

Remember one thing—it has nowhere been said that you must renounce the world in order to rise even to the highest kind of devotion. All that we find is this—that the best of devotees never entertain any worldly desires and never suffer themselves to be won over by the world's charms, they make no distinction between friend and foe, honour and insult, praise and blame. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna has not counselled Arjuna to renounce the world, he has posi-

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10. तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥

11. ये तु धर्मामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. XII, Slokas 19, 20.

12. न किञ्चित् साधवो धीरा भक्ता ह्येकान्तिनो मम ।
वाञ्छन्त्यपि मया दत्तं कैवल्यमपुनर्भवम् ॥

Srimadbhagavata, Skandha XI, Ch. XX, Sloka 34.

tively enjoined upon him not to do so. He has repeatedly affirmed the principle that the duties of this world have to be discharged with a mind divested of all worldly desires, and without observing any distinction between friend and foe, honour and insult, praise and blame. If Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to take up arms against Duryodhana, it was for the discharge of a duty, not for revenge. In the performance of this duty, we shall no doubt often have to chastise sin and injustice, frequently even to apply the rod to some. But care must always be taken to keep the heart pure and unaffected by anger, spite or revenge.

I have now to explain to you how an ordinary devotee, a devotee of the lowest type, can rise up to the highest class. I have already cited to you what Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita.* And again in the *Srimadbhagavata,* to Uddhava :

> " Those of my devotees who have not been able to control their passions yet, will not be led away by worldly pleasures for the reason that they have sincere faith in Me.
>
> " As fire rich with up-shooting flames reduces fuel into ashes, so does devotion, when directed to Me, completely destroy all sin."[13]

You grow in purity as you grow in devotion to God. Love begets a desire to imitate the beloved one. God

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13. बाध्यमानोऽपि मद्भक्तो विषयैरजितेन्द्रियः ।
प्रायः प्रगल्भया भक्त्या विषयैर्नाभिभूयते ॥
यथाग्निः सुसमृद्धार्च्चिः करोत्येधांसि भस्मसात् ।
तथा मद्विषया भक्तिरुद्धवैनांसि कृत्स्नशः ॥

Srimadbhagavata, XI, Ch. XIV, Slokas, 18-19.

gradually reveals Himself to one that is devoted to Him, and grows dearer as time wears on. God is immaculate, and he that has learnt to love the Immaculate, can he suffer himself to be stained with sin? Human nature will always imitate the object of its choice, and it follows therefore that the more a man is devoted to God, the more will he aspire to assimilate His attributes. And the further you advance on the line, the keener will the desire grow upon you to imitate those virtues. The result is a gradual disappearance of all sinful tendencies and worldly desires. God is all Joy and Delight, and the moment you begin to love Him, your heart swells with joy, and all vicious propensities and worldly desires which are opposed to that joy, seem bitter and repulsive. As devotion grows, sin is bound to disappear. Says Sri Krishna to Arjuna :

> "This illusion of mine caused by the qualities of the phenomena, is hard to surmount. They who betake themselves to Me, cross over this illusion."[14]

Sri Chaitanya thus explained the matter to Sanatana :

> "As wealth brings comfort and from comfort all want vanishes of itself, so from devotion arises love in Sri Krishna and when by love you have a taste of Him, all worldly misery invariably ends."

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14. दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. VII, Sloka 14.

Devotion calls forth such a power in the heart as destroys all ignorance :

> " As a conflagration in the forest burns a serpent into ashes, so does devotion to Hari, followed by enlightened virtues, destroy ignorance."[15]

Faith grows as ignorance disappears, and with the growth of faith, you imbibe a desire to hear about Him, to sing His praise and to meditate on Him. And this leads to attachment, attachment to liking, and liking to Love. Says Sri Rupa Goswami in his *Bhaktirasamritasindhu* :

> " First there is regard, then comes a desire for good company, and then worship, which result in the cessation of all that is evil, and then arises faith ; after that comes attachment leading on to liking, which ultimately deepens into love. This is the way of love."[16]

And again in another place ;

> " Liking is the preparatory stage of love."[17]

What is ' liking ?'

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15. कृतानुयात्रा विद्याभिर्हरिभक्तिरनुत्तमा ।
अविद्यां निर्दहत्याशु दावज्वालेव पन्नगीम् ।।

Padmapurana.

16. आदौ श्रद्धा ततः सङ्गो सङ्गोऽथ भजनक्रिया ।
ततोऽनर्थनिवृत्तिः स्यात् ततो निष्ठा रुचिस्ततः ।।
अथासक्तिस्ततो भावस्ततः प्रेमाभ्युदञ्चति ।
साधकानामयं प्रेम्णः प्रादुर्भावे भवेत् क्रमः ।।

Bhaktirasamritasindhu.

17. प्रेम्णस्तु प्रथमावस्था भाव इत्यभिधीयते ।

"That which adorns the soul by the pure qualities of virtue, and that which, by creating a pure taste, purgeth the heart of all sins, and that which assumes a likeness to the Sun of Love, is known as 'liking.'"[18]

The following are the virtues which according to Sri Rupa Goswami, characterise a man who has just begun to like God :

"Unperturbedness of the mind in danger or calamity, constant meditation, aversion to all objects of sensual pleasure, want of a false sense of honour, firm hope, intense earnestness of purpose, an eager desire for singing His praise and love for all places of His residence,"

which last means a love for sacred places first, and with the growth of faith in His omnipresence, love for the world at large. In a person who is distinguished by these qualities, the following eight features will manifest themselves, though, it may be, to a slight degree only. They characterise what is known as a सात्विकी or pure and enlightened nature :

"Cessation of the breath, perspiration, horripilation, change of colour, a husky voice, convulsion of the limbs, discoloured body, tears, and loss of consciousness."

The first arises out of a feeling of pleasure, fear, surprise, sorrow or anger. The body becomes inert, and

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18. शुद्धसत्वविशेषात्मा प्रेम सूर्यांशु साम्यभाक्।
रुचिभिश्चित्तमासृण्य कृदसौ भाव उच्यते ॥

Bhaktirasamritasindhu.

the action of the senses ceases, and even the power of speech disappears for the time. A feeling of pleasure may come out of a perception of the sweetness of God. Fear may arise out of the thought that the votary may not, in spite of all his efforts, be able to see Him. Surprise may be due to the wonderful manifestations of God in creation. Sorrow may come out of a thought of separation from Him. Anger may be against His vilifiers or even against Himself, when He withholds His mercy, though repeatedly invoked. Perspiration may be due to the exhaustion of the body on account of pleasure, fear or anger, etc. Surprise, pleasure, enthusiasm and fear cause the hairs to stand on end. A broken or hoarse voice is caused by sorrow, surprise, anger, pleasure or fear. Feelings of anxiety, fear, or pleasure induce the limbs to tremble and bring on convulsions of the body. On account of sorrow, fear, or anger, the body changes colour, and gradually becomes thin and emaciated. Tears are caused by pleasure, anger and sorrow : those that are due to pleasure are cold, and those that are due to the last two, are warm. The eyes are disturbed and grow ruddy and are in the end cleansed. Loss of consciousness may arise out of pain or pleasure. It makes the body unsteady, and the man falls to the ground.

The above eight features do not all manifest themselves in a person who has just imbibed a liking for God. Some of them are found, and that only in a very slight degree. According to Sri Rupa Goswami, there are four stages of their development :—

(1) '*Smouldering*' when one or two of them have just appeared and you can conceal them if you

like. As an illustration, he cites the following sloka :

"As he went on hearing the praise of Hari, the Enemy of sin, the hairs of the priest's eye-lids became slightly moistened with tears, his cheeks grew ruddy, and his nose perspired."[19]

(2) '*Glowing,*' when two or three simultaneously manifest themselves, and can be concealed with great difficulty. Instance the following :

"O dear ! when the sound of his reed-pipe came from within the distant caves, with difficulty did I succeed in concealing the lump in my throat, and the huskiness of my voice, but, alas, failed altogether in suppressing the tremor of the body. And from this, my intelligent relatives suspected that I was in love with Sri Krishna."[20]

(3) '*Flaming,*' when four or five of them simultaneously appear in an aggravated form, and you lose all power to control them. The following is an instance in point :

"The sage Narada on seeing Sri Krishna be-

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19. आकर्णयन्नघहरामवैरिकीर्त्ति
पक्ष्माग्रमिश्रविरलाश्रुरभूत् पुरोधाः ।
यष्टा दरोच्छ्वसितलोमकपोलमीषत्
प्रस्विन्ननासिकमुवाह मुखारविन्दम् ॥

Bhaktirasamritasindhu.

20. निरुद्धं बाष्पाम्भः कथमपि मया गद्गदगिरो
ह्रिया सद्यो गूढ़ाः सखि विघटितो वेपथुरपि ।
गिरिद्रोण्यां वेणौ ध्वनति निपुणैरिङ्गितनये
तथाप्यूहाञ्चक्रे मम मनसि रागः परिजनैः ॥

fore him was so much beside himself with joy that he could not say his prayers as his voice was choked, could not play on his lyre on account of the trembling of the body and could not even see him, as tears filled his eyes."[21]

(4) '*Blazing*', when five, six or more of them at once manifest themselves and attain to the highest perfection. Here is Sri Chaitanya dancing in joy before the car of Jagannath at Puri :

> " What a wonderful change in his body takes place, as the Lord dances vehemently before the car. All the eight सात्विकी features manifest themselves in his body simultaneously. The hairs stand on end and the muscles start up, as it were, and he stands like a *Simul* tree covered with thorns. His teeth are so violently shaking that they seem to be coming out every instant. He is profusely perspiring throughout the body, and even blood comes out in the pores of his skin. With difficulty he utters the first or the second letter of the name of Jagannath and his voice is choked in the attempt. Tears flow from his eyes with the rapidity of a current of water flowing from a waterspout. They wet all his neighbours' clothes. His fair complexion sometimes turns golden like the rising sun, and is sometimes as

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21. न शक्तिमुपवीणने चिरमधत्त कम्पाकुलो
न गद्गदनिरुद्धवाक् प्रभुरभूदुपश्लोकने ॥
क्षमोऽजनि न वीक्षणे विगलदश्रुपूरः पुरो
मधुद्विषि परिस्फुरत्यवशमूर्त्तिरासीन्मुनिः ॥

tender and beautiful as the *Mallika* flower. Now he stands immovable and now he rolls on the earth and now again stands inert like a log of dry wood."

This is the final stage in which the eight features mentioned above all appear. The preliminary stage of liking has been passed, and feeling has deepened into Love.

Chapter VII
LOVE

The *Bhaktirasamrita-Sindhu* says:

> " The emotion which thoroughly smooths the heart, is full of a feeling of one's own and is highly intense, is called 'Love' by the wise."

In the *Naradapancharatra :*

> " Bhishma, Prahlada, Uddhava and Narada have defined Love to be that feeling of ' my own ' which is full of attachment towards God, to the exclusion of anything else."[1]

You will remember how Narada has defined *Bhakti :*

> " It is a feeling of deep love towards some one."

And also how Sandilya defines it :

> "It is the supreme attachment to God."

I have explained in the foregoing chapters the chief characteristics of true *Bhaktas*, how their hearts become pure, how they regard all created beings and I have already referred to what Habi the son of Rikhava said to Janaka in the *Srimadbhagavata* and also to what Sri Krishna said in the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna. I will now indicate from works on *Bhakti* what relations subsist between God and His devotees.

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1. अनन्यममता विष्णौ ममता प्रेमसङ्गता ।
भक्तिरित्युच्यते भीष्मप्रल्हादोद्धवनारदैः ॥

Naradapancharatra.

It has just been said that when attachment deepens into Love, it passes through three successive stages. The tender emotion of the heart is first intensified into a warm affection and then into glowing love and lastly into a flaming passion for Him. The great sage Sandilya had these stages in his mind, when he wrote the following :

> "As you can make out the nature of a man's feelings towards another by the signs that he betrays (when you speak about that man), so you can gauge the purity of one's love of God by the signs of tears, horripilation, etc., that he betrays when you suggest to him anything about God."

Sandilya lays down the following outward manifestations as some of the true criteria of *Bhakti* :

> "And we learn from the *Smritis* such signs in abundance as Respect, Honour, Joy, Forlornness, Ignoring the existence of any object other than God, Celebration of His praise, Living for His sake, Considering everything as His, Perceiving Him in all things, Resignation to His will, etc."[2]

Swapneswara, the commentator of Sandilya's Aphorisms, has thus illustrated each of the above characteristics :

'Respect', as in Arjuna:

"The righteous Dhananjaya, in whatever

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2. सम्मानबहुमानप्रीतिविरहेतरविचिकित्सामहिमख्यातितदर्थप्राणस्थान-तदीयतासर्वतद्भावा प्रातिकूल्यादीनि च स्मरणेभ्यो बाहुल्यात् ।

Sandilyasutra, Ch. II, Sutra 44.

position he may be, never fails to rise up before Sri Krishna with faith and affection."[3]

'Honour' as in Ikshvaku:

"Because of fondness for Him, the King showed great honour to His name, to the deer, to the lotus and the clouds that bore His colour."[4]

'Joy' as in Vidura:

"The joy which I feel because of Thy coming, O lotus-eyed, what shall I speak of it to Thee? Thou art the inmost soul of all embodied beings."[5]

'Forlornness', as in the milkwomen of Brindavan:

"It is not possible for us to speak before our elders—what can we say? What can they do for us, burnt as we are with the fire of separation?"[6]

'Ignoring all objects except God', as in Upamanyu:

"At Sankara's command I would even be a

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3. प्रत्युत्थानं तु कृष्णस्य सर्वावस्थो धनञ्जयः ।
न लङ्घयति धर्मात्मा भक्त्या प्रेम्णा च सर्वदा ॥

Mahabharata, Dronaparva, Ch. LXXVIII, Sloka 3.

4. पक्षपातेन तन्नाम्नि मृगे पद्मे च तादृशि ।
बभार मेघे तद्वर्णे बहुमानमतिं नृपः ॥

Nrisimhapurana, Ch. XXV, Sloka 22.

5. या प्रीतिः पुण्डरीकाक्ष तवागमनकारणात् ।
सा किमाख्यायते तुभ्यमन्तरात्मासि देहिनाम् ॥

Mahabharata, Udyogaparva, Ch. LXL, Sloka 24.

6. गुरूणामग्रतो वक्तुं किं ब्रवीमि न नः क्षमम् ।
गुरवः किं करिष्यन्ति दग्धानां विरहाग्निना ॥

Vishnupurana, Ch. V, Sloka 18.

worm or a grasshopper, but I desire not the three worlds, if given by thee, O Indra."[7]

'Celebration of Divine praise':

"The guilty one, tormented in Hell, was thus addressed by Yama: 'Was not the God Keshava, the destroyer of all sorrow, worshipped by thee?'"[8]

Again:

"Yama whispers into the ears of his myrmidon when he sees him with the noose in hand, 'You will not touch the followers of Madhusudana, for I am master of all save those that worship Him.'"[9]

Here is an example of how Hanuman lived for His sake alone:

"So long as Thy sacred topic will be current on earth, I shall live in the world following Thy behests."[10]

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7. अपि कीटः पतङ्गो वा भवेयं शङ्कराज्ञया ।
न तु शक्र त्वया दत्तं त्रैलोक्यमपि कामये ॥
Mahabharata, Anushasanaparva, Ch. XIV, Sloka 186.

8. नरके पच्यमानस्तु यमेन परिभाषितः ।
किं त्वया नार्चितो देवः केशवः क्लेशनाशनः ॥
Nrisimhapurana, Ch. VIII, Sloka 21.

9. स पुरुषमभिवीक्ष्य पाशहस्तं वदति यमः किल तस्य कर्णमूले ।
परिहर मधुसूदन प्रपन्नान् प्रभुरहमन्यनृणां न वैष्णवानाम् ॥
Vishnupurana, Ch. III, Sloka 7.

10. यावत्तव कथा लोके विचरिष्यति पावनी ।
तावत् स्थास्यामि मेदिन्यां तवाज्ञामनुपालयन् ॥
Ramayana, Uttarakanda, Sloka 107.

The following shows how Uparichara Vasu regarded everything as His :

> " He always considers his own kingdom, his wives and his conveyances as belonging to God."[11]

Prahlada affords an example of perceiving Him in all things :

> " Knowing Him manifested in all creation, the sages will have an implicit respect for all created things."[12]

' Submission to the Divine Will ', as in Bhishma : when Sri Krishna was about to put an end to Bhishma's life, the latter exclaimed :

> " Come, Come, Master of all gods, who art omnipresent, I bow to Thee that holdest the mace, the sword and the bow in Thy hands. O Master of all the worlds, hurl me down by force from my chariot in this fearful battle."[13]

Ramaprasada has a song :

> " I love dark colour because the Mother with dishevelled hair who enchants the world is dark-coloured."

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11. आत्मराज्यं धनं चैव कलत्रं वाहनं तथा ।
एतद्भागवतं सर्वमिति तत् प्रेक्षते सदा ॥
Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Ch. CCCXXXV, Sloka 24.

12. एवं सर्वेषु भूतेषु भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
कर्त्तव्या पण्डितैर्ज्ञात्वा सर्वभूतमयं हरिम् ॥
Vishnupurana, Ch. I, Sloka 19.

13. एह्येहि देवेश जगन्निवास नमोऽस्तु ते शाङ्गगदासिपाणे ।
प्रसह्य मां पातय लोकनाथ रथादुदग्राद्भुतशौर्य्यसंख्ये ।
Mahabharata, Bhishmaparva, Ch. LIX, Slokas 96, 97.

As Guhaka Chandala said:

"My eyes incessantly stream with tears at the sight of fresh clouds in the sky."[14]

These two are excellent instances of 'Honour.'

Ramaprasada has another song:

"The ever-joyful Mother is always sporting in my heart. In whatever situation I may be, I never forget the Name. And as I close my eyes, I see within me the Goddess who wears the garland of skulls.[15] My worldly wisdom is at an end, and men call me mad. Let them say what they will—only may I win that Mad Goddess when the end comes."

This is true Joy:

Vidura's wife was one day bathing when Sri Krishna came to her doors calling out Vidura's name, as he came. This bewitching call so overpowered Vidura's wife that she altogether forgot to put on her clothes and ran up to Sri Krishna stark naked. The latter at once threw out his scarf to her. With this piece of cloth she covered herself, caught hold of Sri Krishna by the hand, and brought him inside her hut. And then she knew not what to do, so completely had she lost herself in joy. Her means so limited, what could she give him to eat? She brought some scented water and a few plantains. But she was so beside herself with joy, that while peeling off the plantains and offering them to Sri Krishna, she was at times presenting to him the rind of the fruit instead of the

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14. Because Ramachandra, who was the object of his worship had that complexion. Tr.

15. The Goddess Káli. Tr.

pulp. And what was Sri Krishna doing ? From His *Bhakta* He would welcome even poison, and the rind given by Vidura's wife was as acceptable to Him as the pulp and He was cheerfully disposing of both. Vidura, who had gone to the King's presence, came home and saw what was being done by his wife and he took her to task for what she was doing. It was then that she came to her senses, and blushed. What better example could there be of Love than this ?

Sri Chaitanya is the brightest example of '*Viraha*' or forlornness. I will cite some extracts from the Vaishnava poets. Here is a picture by the poet Govindadasa of the initial stage :

> " Why is young Gouranga scribbling on the earth, with his head drooping and tears gathering in his eyes ? His body bright as gold, has turned so pale. He keeps wide awake all night, and has not a wink of sleep. Whoever touches him, he keeps looking at his face with eyes brimful of tears. Ever and anon, he rests his face on the palm of his hands, and heaves deep sighs. These are the traits that have saved humanity, poor Govindadasa alone excepted."

When the feeling deepens,

> " Dear Gourachandra smites his breast, sobs and sobs, and cries out in deep agony, 'O Lord, O Lord.' He sighs heavily, and then looks at the face of Gadadhara with swimming eyes. Wet with perspiration, he looks up with a steadfast gaze. The fire of *Viraha* consumes his heart, the body, although, is not reduced to ashes. What to do, where to go, none would say. 'What can I say', says Haridasa, 'how Gora has come to be

so ?' Radha's love, says Jnanadasa, has done all this, and Gora is always full of that love."

Insanity on account of *Viraha* :

"Alas, my young Goura! He does not know the day from the night, and laughs without cause. My master is lost in the feeling that is up in him. Now he breaks forth into a song, and makes incoherent enquiries and exclaims, 'Where is He, my Lord ?' and now again his whole frame trembles as with cold, and at times he leaps up with arms raised and dances round and round, mutters and raves. And now he shuts his eyes and cries out, 'O Lord, O Lord,' and again bursts forth into loud lamentations. This humble servant Narahari says, Radha's love has made my Gourahari so. With such feelings has he come to save men of the *Kaliyuga*. Why am I, poor man, then deprived of salvation ?"

Here is the tenth stage of *Viraha* :

"My beautiful Gouranga, his body bright as gold, rolls in the dust and he lapses into a swoon, and the breath goes out for a time. The disciples surround him on all sides and weep. Man or woman, every one looks at him and sobs. Birds and beasts all weep and will not be soothed."

Kavira knew the value of *Viraha* and therefore said :

"Kavira, this body is worthless without *Viraha*. *Viraha* is my king. Without it, the mind is desolate as the grave."

And again,

"The beloved will not be won by smiles. Whoever has won Him, has won Him with tears.

If He could be had by frolic and jollity, none would be without Him."

As an illustration of *Itaravichikitsa* or ignoring the existence of anything other than God, take the following from Tulsidas :

> " Clouds rumble and roar and rain hail-stones and fling thunderbolts: and yet, does the *Chataka* bird look for water anywhere else ?"

Ramaprasada was worked up with this spirit when he gave out the following :

> " Whom do I fear in this world when my Mother, the spouse of Shiva, is its sovereign ? In eternal joy do I live under the direct sway of my everjoyful Mother."

To have your eyes fixed upon Him alone, to disregard everything else, and fearlessly to go forward in life—characterise *Itaravichikitsa.*

As regards the virtue of celebrating God's praise, I need hardly illustrate it any further than has been done in the commentaries on *Sandilyasutra* referred to above.

The following beautiful Bengali song shows how the *Bhakta* considers everything as His :

> " We are like dolls in a puppetshow. We dance to His pleasure, we die when he strikes us dead, and live when He makes us live. We sing and dance to the tunes He is pleased to set for us. He knows which is good and which bad. Whatever He calls good is good, we have no choice. All our exultations are in His strength. Some of us win, some lose. Linked together in one chain as we are, He regulates our lot. We sit and lie,

rise and run, at His bidding. He is the Player, and we the dice."

Ramaprasada has excellently brought out the ideas of living for His sake and perceiving Him in all things in the following strains of a song of his :

> "Regard lying down as prostration before Her, sleep as Her meditation beyond thought, and walk around the city as perambulation round the great Mother. Whatever reaches thine ears is nothing but *Mantras*—various formulæ of Her name, for the fifty letters of the alphabet are each but a symbol of Her name. Ramaprasada rejoices in proclaiming that the Supreme Mother is immanent in all that exists. Eating is but pouring clarified butter into the sacrificial fire of Her resplendent Being."

The same sentiment pervades another beautiful song of his :

> "Of what use is this body, if the heart will not melt with Her love ? Shame to this tongue, if it does not utter the name of Mother Káli. Sinful are the eyes that have not seen Her image. And that must be a vicious heart indeed, which will not make an offering of itself at the feet of Káli. Let those ears be struck deaf that will not listen to that sweet name with tears streaming in the eyes. The hands that help to fill the maw, who should like to have them, if they would not hold in the hollow of their palm offerings of sandalpaste, *Java* flowers, *Vilva* leaves ? Vainly do the feet walk about by day and night that will not willingly go the way that leads to Káli's temple."

'Whatever Thou shalt do is the best that can be done for me'—this is Submission to His will. 'Thy will be done,' said Jesus. Job lost all that he had on earth—son, daughter and all dear relations, and yet he exclaimed—

"If Thou slayest Me, yet will I trust in Thee."

The essence of this spirit is embodied in the following Bengali song:

> "Whatever position Thou mayest ordain for me, O Lord, that is a blessing for me; so let me never forget Thee."

Another characteristic of a true *Bhakta* is:

> "The gratification in Him and Him alone of all desire, anger, pride, and the other passions, consecrating all activities to Him."[16]

The *Bhakta* sports in Self, rejoices in Self. He hugs the great Beloved, kisses Him, and passes his days and his nights with Him in his bosom. Separation makes him mad, union makes him spend time in a lover's twaddle with the Most High. Gouranga's life bears testimony to this. Hafiz had also drunk of the spring of this love.

Where there is love, there must be anger and pride also. Gouranga frequently displayed these feelings towards God. Says Ramaprasada, his back up with a sense of wounded pride and consequent anger:

> "I will never call Thee '*Ma*' again. O, the sufferings Thou hast put me to, and how much

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16. तदर्पिताखिलाचारः सन् कामक्रोधाभिमानादिकं तस्मिन्नेव करणीयं तस्मिन्नेव करणीयम् ।।

Naradabhaktisutra, Aphorism 65.

more art Thou still adding! Again and again have I been calling Thee *Ma, Ma,*—hast thou struck Thyself deaf and blind? What boots it that the mother is alive if the son is in such plight? A householder I was, Thou hast made me a homeless anchorite. What worse canst Thou do? The worst that may come to me—I will beg from door to door. Does a child cease to live because the mother is dead? How strange is this conduct in a mother, to turn Thyself inimical to Thy son! What worse canst Thou do than consign me to the miseries of a re-birth?"

Indignation of this character has, I suppose, hardly its parallel in the whole religious literature of the world. It befits the *Bhakta* alone.

In discussing the characteristics of a true *Bhakta,* Gouranga thus said to Rupa Goswami:

"According to different classes of devotees, devotion is of five kinds. They may be styled: Quietude, Servitude, Friendship, Paternity and Conjugality. Quietude is marked by a Godward tendency and renunciation of worldly desires. There is no attachment, properly so called, but only an intellectual appreciation of the attributes of God. Servitude recognizes Him as the Master. The devotee offers Him all respect and reverence and pleases Him by service. In Servitude, there are the characteristics of Quietude plus service. In Friendship you combine both and make a confidant of God. Respect and Reverence give place to camaraderie. The Lord is overmastered by the deep attachment and the feeling of *alter ego* that prevails in friendship. In Paternity, the Lord is

in the relation of a child to the devotee. It comprehends the first three to which are added fondling and rebuke and chastisement. The devotee thinks of himself as the Father and Krishna as his darling. Conjugality comprehends the first four plus the absolute dedication of the whole being to the Lord as by a wife to her husband."

When Prahlada was engaged in his devotions, God was so pleased with him that He appeared and offered him a boon :

> "Gentle Prahlada, mayest thou fare well. I have been pleased with thee that art the best of the Asuras. Ask for any boon thou likest, for I always fulfil men's desires."[17]

To this Prahlada replied :

> "Naturally so prone to desires, tempt me not by offering boons. I have sought shelter with Thee in order to free myself from desires. Or, perhaps Thou art testing my fidelity by inducing me to indulge in desires which are the root-cause of a worldly life, and are the fetters of the human heart. Else, O thou Master of the universe, why shouldst Thou tempt me with such things, all merciful that Thou art? He that asks for a boon from Thee, O Lord, is certainly a trader in Thy love, and no true servant of Thine. For, he is not a true servant that serves his master with some end in view, and neither is he a true master that grants his servant's desire with a view to see him-

17. प्रल्हाद भद्र भद्रं ते प्रीतोऽहं तेऽसुरोत्तम।
वरं वृणीष्वाभिमतं कामपूरोऽस्म्यहं नृणाम्॥
Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha VII, Ch. IX, Sloka 52.

self respected for the same. I am a worshipper of Thine, and certainly I have no end to satisfy in serving Thee and Thou art my self-less Master. Unlike the world's master and servant, we have no purpose to serve. O thou Supreme Giver of all boons, if Thou art so anxious to grant me a boon, let me have this boon then that no desire of any sort whatever may spring in my mind. For the growth of desire means the wreck of the senses, the feelings, the vital functions, self-consciousness, righteousness, endurance, intelligence, modesty, beauty, vigour, memory and truth. O, Thou lotus-eyed, when men give up all their heart's desire, then alone are they fit for Thy glories."[18]

In the District of Twenty-Four Parganas in Bengal is reported to have lived a gentleman who worked as

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18. मा मां प्रलोभयोत्पत्त्यासक्तं कामेषु तैर्वरैः ।
तत्सङ्गभीतो निर्विण्णो मुमुक्षुस्त्वामुपाश्रितः ॥
भृत्यलक्षणजिज्ञासुर्भक्तं कामेष्वचोदयत् ।
भवान् संसारबीजेषु हृदयग्रन्थिषु प्रभो ॥
नान्यथा तेऽखिलगुरो घटेत करुणात्मनः ।
यस्तु आशिष आशास्ते न स भृत्यः स वै वणिक् ॥
आशासानो न वै भृत्यः स्वामिन्याशिष आत्मनः ।
न स्वामी भृत्यतः स्वाम्यमिच्छन् यो राति चाशिषः ॥
अहं त्वकामस्त्वद्भक्तस्त्वं च स्वाम्यनपाश्रयः ।
नान्यथेहावयोरर्थो राजसेवकयोरिव ॥
यदि दास्यसि मे कामान्वरांस्त्वं वरदर्षभ ।
कामानां हृद्यसंरोहं भवतस्तु वृणे वरं ॥
इन्द्रियाणि मनः प्राण आत्मा धर्मो धृतिर्मतिः ।
ह्रीः श्रीस्तेजः स्मृतिः सत्यं यस्य नश्यन्ति जन्मना ॥
विमुञ्चति यदा कामान्मानवो मनसि स्थिताम् ।
तर्ह्येव पुण्डरीकाक्ष भगवत्त्वाय कल्पते ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha VII, Ch. X, Slokas 2-10.

the Collector's Peshkar. He had a devotional frame of mind and used to worship God every morning in the usual Hindu style for a number of hours together, and he could not therefore attend office before the hour of noon. His master, the European Collector, first warned him but this was of no avail. And the Collector was at length compelled to dismiss him from service. The poor man built a humble cottage on the banks of the holy Bhagirathi at Kalighat and lived in it and pursued his devotions with greater fervour day and night. He gathered his daily food by begging. You can easily imagine with what difficulty he maintained himself. His friends took pity upon him and informed the Collector of his condition, and begged his re-instatement in office. The Collector one day stepped over to his hut, and was deeply moved at what he saw. And he at once said to him, "I give you back your post. You may come to office any hour you like after finishing your daily worship." The Peshkar thereupon replied : "I shall ever remain indebted to you and shall never forget your kindness. But you will pardon me, I have no mind to leave the Service I have just entered, even for a situation worth a thousand rupees a month, though I live here by begging. For, where shall I have the joy I now feel ? Bless me that I may spend the rest of my days in the service of mothers *Káli* and *Ganga*." He could no longer accept a Peshkar's post.

In Friendship, respect and honour give place to a sense of equality. The *Bhakta* confides fully in his Friend, throws his arms round His neck, and embraces Him. There are the usual quarrels and tiffs as well as the sports and funs. "He rides upon his Friend's

shoulders and allows Him to ride too, challenges him to mock fights, ministers to His wants and receives similar ministrations from Him." The chief characteristic of Friendship is that nothing can be dearer to the *Bhakta* than his Friend. Guhaka said, "None is so dear to me on earth as my Rama." In this aspect of *Bhakti*, Guhaka and Arjuna represent the *Bhakta*, while Rama and Krishna stand for the Lord. Sridama[19] once expressed to Sri Krishna the sentiments of a *Bhakta* of this class :

> "Thou heartless, why didst thou leave us so suddenly on the banks of the *Yamuna ?* Fortunately, we have found thee out at length. Come, gratify thy dear friends with close embraces. Verily do I tell thee that a moment's separation from thee upsets even the cows in our keeping, all our work about them, our thoughts and wishes, and everything else."[20]

This really is what happens in Love. Sri Rupa Goswami has thus described the doings of Sri Krishna's dear companions :

> "To beat him hollow in fight, to pull him by his cloth, to snatch flowers from his hands and to adorn themselves with such flowers, to pull

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19. A cowherd boy, one of Sri Krishna's playmates. Tr.
20. त्वं नः प्रोज्झ्य कठोर यमुनातटे कस्मादकस्माद्गतो
दिष्ट्या दृष्टिमितोऽसि हन्त निबिडाश्लेषैः सखीन् प्रीणय।
ब्रूमः सत्यमदर्शने तव मनाक् का धेनवः के वयं
किं गोष्ठं किमभीष्टमित्यचरितः सर्वं विपर्यस्यति ॥

Bhaktirasamritasindhu

him by the hand, and similar acts, are the favourite pursuits of His dear friends."[21]

He that can thus make a play-mate of God in his heart of hearts, has realised the sweetness of Divine friendship. Challenging his God to a combat of love, the devotee advances to the fight, saying, 'Let us see who wins, Thou or I,' and captures Him with love. Thus did Ramaprasada make a captive of Mother *Shyama* :

> "Listening to that Name is my ears' best adornment, the chanting of that name is as my necklace. When I have the Jewel of Love as my garland, need I further adornment ?"

Blind Vilvamangal[22] is trudging along the road to Brindavan, Sri Krishna Himself leading the way in the guise of a little child. Vilvamangal is burning with a desire to have a touch of that dear hand which blesseth and chaseth away all fear. He catches the hand somehow, and Sri Krishna immediately shakes it off. Vilvamangal then exclaims :

> "What is there heroic in thus throwing off my hands, Krishna ? To get away from my *heart* would be a feat of true valour for thee, indeed !"[23]

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21. निर्जितीकरणं युद्धे वस्त्रे वृत्वास्य कर्षणं।
पुष्पाद्याच्छेदनं हस्तात् कृष्णेन स्वप्रसाधनं।
हस्ताहस्तिप्रसङ्गाद्याः प्रोक्ताः प्रियसखक्रिया ::॥

22. Vilvamangal is described in the *Vaishnava* literature as a person who, from a man of lewd habits, turned a devotee of the highest order. Tr.

23. हस्तावुत्क्षिप्य निर्यासि बलात् कृष्ण किमद्भुतं।
हृदयाद् यदि निर्यासि पौरुषं गणयामि ते॥

This is a very fine example of the third aspect of *Bhakti*—Friendship. In the paternal aspect of love, God is the *Bhakta's* darling. He fondles and caresses Him. It is difficult to comprehend this aspect of *Bhakti.* I will just mention a Bengali song which beautifully illustrates it :

> "Listen, O Lord of Vraja, my Gopala appeared in a dream this night and Oh, where is he gone ? That naughty little thing, his face lovely as the moon and his eyes full of tears, was plucking at the skirts of my cloth and crying, 'Butter, Ma, give me butter.' I brushed the dust off his body, lifted him to my bosom, and wiped his face with the hem of my cloth, and yet the moon of my soul, dearie, was crying for the moon. His face far lovelier than an array of myriads of moons, why should he cry for the moon ? 'Spotless among all moons as thou art, what a number of them are rolling beneath thy feet,' said I. His dark blue complexion was grey with dust, and ah, how melodious was the voice calling me 'Ma,' 'Ma.' 'Cream 'Cream,' he cried. Poor me ! 'Away Away' was my reply. Alas, I shove him off and said, 'I have no time.'

What a nectarine flood of maternal love is surging through this song ! Mother Yashoda's heart bends with it ! What a rich stream of milk is welling out of her breast ! The figure of Gopala is glowing in the depths of her soul! She is crazed at the thought of the slight shown to Gopala. Her heart is convulsed

with agony. She is being consumed with the fire of separation.

The spiritual significance of this song is exceedingly beautiful. The Lord comes as a child begging love, the *Bhakta* fondles Him for a moment and then sends Him away. He leaves disappointed and the *Bhakta,* bereft of His loving presence, is in throes of repentance. Thus does the Lord appear before the devotee like a flash of lightning, and immediately disappears. He is ever in the habit of playing 'Hide and Seek' with His *Bhakta.* Here is a Bengali song :

> " 'Here am I, touch me if Thou canst'—so saying, where dost Thou hide Thyself ? I cannot find Thee. And when I am tired with seeking, lo, Thou criest 'Bo' within my heart."

It is impossible to describe the feeling of conjugality between the *Bhakta* and his Lord. As the devoted wife knows none but her husband, so does the *Bhakta* think of nothing but his Beloved. The devotee completely dedicates himself to the Lord, and exclaims :

> "My eyes stream at the thought of Thy beauty, and my mind loses itself in the contemplation of Thy goodness. Each limb of mine longs for each of Thine. The whole being of mine pants for the whole of Thine."

We can conceive of nothing higher than this. Sri Chaitanya was saturated with this spirit. He stands in relation to God as Radha to Sri Krishna and as the human soul to the Divine.

When the heart of the devotee is redolent with the fragrance of this feeling, in a region far—too

far—too too far—beyond the filthy atmosphere of carnality, where night is not, in the bower of bliss, illumined by the holy light whose transcendent liveliness cannot even be conceived by the Demon of Sensuality, in those sacred retreats of the Empyrean, the devotee

> "gazes and gazes into the face of the Dear One, and is delirious with joy."

And again,

> "They tell their love to each other. Now they fall out and now they meet and embrace and kiss and are eloquent in praise of each other. They look and look, and are full of tears."

Few are privileged to comprehend this lover's sport with the Divine Spirit. Steeped in the spirit of this love, Gouranga sang at the sight of Jagannatha at Puri :

> "Behold, I have at last found that blessed Lord of my soul for whom I was being consumed with the fire of Love."

God grant we may all burn with the fire of Gouranga's holy passion and lust be banished for ever from the earth.

He that has attained to this height, all externals fall off from him. He is beyond all rituals and ceremonies. Hence did the God-intoxicated Hafiz give up all forms prescribed by his scriptures. Says a Bengali song :

> "He in whose heart shineth the Lord of Love, what has he to do with beads and other appliances and modes of worship ?"

Drunk with the wine of love, he rises superior to all shame, fear and pride of birth. Flushed with joy, he sings the glory of love.

The character of 'Pagalini' in the *Vilvamangal*[24] is one of the finest examples of this aspect of devotion. Just see how the call from the Beloved thrills her soul :

> "Hark, there sounds the Charmer's flute. O, how it maddens me! Alone under the *Kadamba* tree, waiting for me, He plays on his flute and casts wistful glances on the way. Mad with my love, the flute calls me again and again. If I don't go, he will go back in tears with a wounded heart."

Whoever has heard the thrills of this flute in the depths of his soul, runs mad. The *Gopinis'* love for Sri Krishna, free from all odour of carnality, affords the noblest example of the conjugal aspect of Divine Love. The madness of *Viraha* that is found in them cannot be met with anywhere else except in Sri Chaitanya. The Lord in the midst of his sports has suddenly vanished. Mad with love, the *Gopinis* are roaming the forests in search of Him and, taking the trees to be living beings, address them thus :

> "The son of Nanda who has stolen our hearts by smiling glances of love, have you seen, O *Asvattha, Plaksha, Nyagrodha,* where he has gone? O *Asoka, Kuruvaka, Naga* and *Punnaga,* where is that Krishna gone, whose bewitching smile disarms the pique of the offended sweetheart? Thou blessed *Tulsi,*

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24. This is a dramatic work in Bengali by Girish Chandra Ghosh, of which *Vilvamangal* is the hero. Tr.

who art so fond of Govinda's feet, where is He gone—the imperishable One, who is so dear to thee and who always wears thee on His feet? I ask, *Malati*, *Mallika*, *Jati*, *Juthika*, has Madhava gone this way gladdening your hearts with a touch of his hand? Ye trees on the Yamuna, *Chyuta*, *Priyala*, *Panasa*, *Kovidara*, *Bakula*, *Amra*, *Kadama*, *Neepa*, you who are born to serve others, serve these unfortunate love-lorn women by pointing out the way Sri Krishna has gone."[25]

Where can you find a parallel to these soul-enthralling strains except in the life of Gouranga?

"Gouranga roams about distracted with the grief of separation, and mad with love. It rends my heart to think that he has given up all sports and frolic. Animate or inanimate, whatever he comes across, he asks indiscriminately, 'O, where is my beloved, the delight of Vraja, gone?' Now he rolls in the dust and

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25. दृष्टो वः कच्चिदश्वत्थप्लक्षन्यग्रोध नो मनः ।
नन्दसूनुर्गतो हृत्वा प्रेमहासावलोकनैः ?
कच्चित् कुरबकाशोकनागपुन्नागचम्पकाः ।
रामानुजो मानिनीनां गतो दर्पहरस्मितः ॥
कच्चित्तुलसि कल्याणि गोविन्दचरणप्रिये ।
सह त्वाऽलिकुलैर्बिभ्रद् दृष्टस्तेऽतिप्रियोऽच्युतः ॥
मालत्यदर्शि वः कच्चिन्मल्लिके जातियूथिके ।
प्रीतिं वो जनयन् यातः करस्पर्शेन माधवः ॥
चूतप्रियालपनसासनकोविदार-
जम्ब्वर्कबिल्वबकुलाम्रकदम्बनीपाः ।
येऽन्ये परार्थभवका यमुनोपकूलाः ।
शंसन्तु कृष्णपदवीं रहितात्मनां नः ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha X, Ch. XXX, Slokas 5-9.

now starts up and runs. The poet Radha Mohan's heart breaks at this sight—Death is far more welcome to him."

In the agony of desolation, he calls Krishna names, using such epithets as 'cruel' and 'heartless.' Sometimes out of a sense of wounded pride, he resolves not to take his name any more : but his heart does not allow it, and he drops Sri Krishna's name, but goes on repeating the name of the *Gopinis* who are constantly associated with Him, and again the rush of feeling makes him forget his resolution, and he beseeches the Lord to gratify him with His presence :

> " Various were the emotions surging within his soul—sorrow, despair, restlessness, eagerness, ecstasy—struggling for mastery, and the source of all was the madness of love. His whole frame was, as it were, a field of sugar-cane and the emotions like infuriated elephants trampled it down. His body prostrated under the weight of the ecstasy, His mind thrilling with emotion, he began to address the Lord :
>
> 'O Lord, O beloved, O Thou the one Friend of the universe, O Krishna, O Inconstant, O Thou Ocean of mercy, O Protector, O my heart's delight, O the apple of mine eye, alas ! alas ! when shall I see Thee ?"[26]

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26. हे देव हे दयित हे भुवनैकबन्धो
हे कृष्ण हे चपल हे करुणैकसिन्धो ।
हे नाथ हे रमण हे नयनाभिराम
हा हा कदानुभवितासि पदं दृशोर्मे ॥

Krishnakarnamrita, Sloka 40.

Now the *Bhakta* calls Him 'fickle,' and the next moment, He is the 'Ocean of mercy'! Such is the incoherence of the Lover's language! Expressions of pique, pride, sarcasm, laudation and detraction alternate with one another, but there is one feeling steady and constant underneath this play of conflicting emotions. A union of pleasure and pain renders this feeling extremely lovely. In the accents of a devoted wife, the *Bhakta* exclaims:

> "This humble votary at His feet,—whether He presses me to His bosom or lacerates my heart by persistent absence, whatever that libertine may do with me, He alone is the Lord of my soul, and none other."[27]

A sense of wounded pride provokes the *Bhakta* to call Him 'libertine.'

> "My Lord is Gopala, the lifter of the mountain,[28] and none else."

—an instance of perfect self-dedication.

In this stage, separation causes pangs like those one experiences in poisoning, and union, an insatiable yearning. Underneath the pangs of separation, there is an ever-running fountain of joy:

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27. आश्लिष्य वा पादरतां पिनष्टु मामदर्शनान्मर्महतां करोतु वा ।
यथा तथा वा विदधातु लम्पटो मत्प्राणनाथस्तु स एव नापरः ॥

28. Gopala is one of the names of Sri Krishna who is said to have lifted and held upon his hands the hill of Govardhana in Brindavan in order to protect the people who had taken shelter in its caves from the incessant rains and hail-storms with which they were visited by the god Indra whom they had offended by their conduct. See *Srimad Bhagavata*, Skandha X, Chs. XXIV, XXV. Tr.

"Strange are the ways of Divine love. The taste of this love may be likened to that of a piece of hot sugar-cane—though too hot for the mouth, you do not give it up. He alone knows the power of this Love who has tasted it—a strange mixture of nectar and poison."

In union, the devotee exclaims:

"I have beheld His beauty since my birth, yet mine eyes are not satisfied. For ages have I pressed Him to my bosom and yet the heart craveth for more. Again and again have I heard his honeyed words and still, it seems to me, not a syllable of them has yet reached my ears. How many sweet nights have we passed together and yet have I not been able to apprehend His love."

All this is past ordinary comprehension. But this is clear that there is no end to the bliss of that devotee who presses Him to his bosom, of whom the *Vedas* say, "Sweet is his friendship." He is sweetness itself, of whom Vilvamangal said,

"Sweet, sweet is the body of my Lord, sweet, sweet, sweet is His face. O, the honey-breathing sweet smile! Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!"[29]

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29. मधुरं मधुरं वपुरस्य विभो-
मधुरं मधुरं वदनं मधुरम् ।
मधुगन्धि मृदुस्मितमेतदहो
मधुरं मधुरं मधुरं मधुरम् ॥

Krishnakarnamrita, Sloka 92.

—who is really 'sweeter than the sweetest, and lovelier than the loveliest.'[30] Glory, glory to that devotee, glory to his race, yea, glory to the land he lives in!

This is the *ultima thule* of *Bhakti* in this world. Who will say what is in the next?

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30. सौम्या सौम्यतराशेषसौम्येभ्यस्त्वतिसुन्दरी ।

Chandi.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

Who is so fortunate as the man that has turned gold, as it were, by contact with the touch-stone of *Bhakti?* The dust of his feet will bless us. God Himself is the slave of His devotee. Says Sri Krishna in the *Srimadbhagavata* :

> " O Dvija, I am not in my own control being under the complete control of my *Bhakta*. I love my *Bhaktas* very dearly. They have taken entire possession of my heart, over which therefore I have lost all power."

Again,

> " I do not care for prosperity, I can even sacrifice myself for the sake of those true devotees who look upon Me as their ultimate goal."

Such indeed is the power wielded by the *Bhakta* over Him :

> " How can I forsake those that have sought my protection leaving wives, children, relatives, houses, riches and all that is dear on earth, and who for My sake do not care for life and even for the next world ? "

Again,

> " Those pious men who look upon all with an equal eye, and who set their heart upon Me, overpower me altogether."

Then,

> "Delighting in My service, they do not desire even emancipation of the four kinds, viz., *Salokya*, etc.,[1] not to speak of mere ephemeral objects."
>
> "The *Sadhus* are my heart, as I am theirs. They know nothing but Myself. Neither do I know anything else but them."[2]

He that bears this relationship with Him, who like Bali[3] has fastened Him to the door of his heart with

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1. These are *'Salokyam,'* living in the same region with Him; *'Samipyam,'* living in proximity to Him; *'Sarupyam,'* bearing likeness of appearance with Him; *'Sayujyam,'* being unified with Him. See *Srimad Bhagavada,* Skandha III, Ch. XXIX, Sloka 13. Tr.

2. अहं भक्तपराधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।
साधुभिर्ग्रस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥
नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैः साधुभिर्विना ।
श्रियं चात्यन्तिकीं ब्रह्मन् येषां गतिरहं परा ॥
ये दारागारपुत्राप्तप्राणान् वित्तमिमं परं ।
हित्वा मां शरणं याताः कथं तांस्त्यक्तुमुत्सहे ॥
मयि निर्बद्धहृदयाः साधवः समदर्शनाः ।
वशीकुर्वन्ति मां भक्त्या सत्स्त्रियः सत्पतिं यथा ॥
मत्सेवया प्रतीतं ते सालोक्यादिचतुष्टयं ।
नेच्छन्ति सेवया पूर्णाः कुतोऽन्यत् कालविप्लुतम् ॥
साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ।
मदन्यत्ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥

Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha IX, Ch. IV, Slokas 63-68.

3. The king of the *Daityas* (Demons) conquered the Heaven of Indra and drove out the gods and their mother Aditi. Aditi thereupon invoked the God Vishnu who, pleased with her worship, entered her womb and being born a Brahmin manikin, appeared before Bali, asked for a gift of such land as would afford room enough for keeping three feet only and on being given the

the cord of love,—who is nobler, happier and more blessed than he ?

> " His manes rejoice, the gods dance with joy, and the earth finds a stay in him."[4]

The soil that he treads turns gold, that which he touches is transformed into a diamond, as it were ; where he casts his eyes, there everything is lit up with the effulgence of the empyrean full-moon, the movement of his limbs wafts the fragrance of heavenly flowers, with every syllable that he utters blossom forth in the sinner's heart, as it were, lotuses with a hundred petals, every action of his floods the earth with a hundred sweet streams from the *Mandakini*.[5] Every thought rains upon the face of this sorrow-stricken world flowers that carry messages of peace and goodwill. Rajoicings attend his name here below. triumphal music proclaims his praises on high. On earth, the golden crown of the mightiest of potentates rolls at his feet, while in Heaven the gods thank themselves to be able to sit by his side. Come, then, let us proclaim to the world this unification of the *Bhakta* with his God and He will unfold to our wondering vision the charming sight of that union. That Charmer of all hearts, let Him shine in our hearts in com-

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same, engrossed the whole universe with two feet, compelled Bali to leave Heaven and take refuge in the nether world, where, however, as a reward for Bali's noble and self-sacrificing generosity, the god promised to be always with him and to protect him from all harm. See *Srimad Bhagavata*, Skandha VIII, Chs. XV, —XXIII. Tr.

4. मोदन्ते पितरो नृत्यन्ति देवताः सनाथा चेयं भूर्भवति ।

Naradabhaktisutra, Sutra 71.

5. The Ganges of Heaven. Tr.

pany with His *Bhakta*, and let us then sing out at the top of our voice, rending the sky and shaking this little earth to its foundations :

> " Victory, victory to the name of Hari which blesseth the world. Victory, victory again to that Name which blesseth the world for ever."[6]

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6. जयति जयति जगन्मङ्गलं हरेर्नाम ।
जयति जयति जगन्मङ्गलं हरेर्नाम ।

—*Sridharaswami*



THE AUTHOR

WELL-KNOWN as the author of this book, which is one of the most widely-read in the Bengali language, Aswini Kumar Datta (1856—1923) was a great patriot and educationist. His love of God, reflected in this book as also in his other works which include *Prem* and *Durgotsav Tattva*, inspired in him a great love for his motherland and especially for the younger generation.

His life was moulded by his intimate contact with Paramahamsa Sri Ramakrishna and Keshub Chander Sen He joined the Bar in 1880, and then threw himself heart and soul into political, social and humanitarian work. He lectured on morality, religion and politics from various platforms, and stressed upon Truth, Love and Purity in all walks of life. The Brojmohan Institution, founded by him and conducted with the help of a few kindred souls, was in no small degree responsible for moulding the character of a large number of young pupils who were reared up in a unique atmosphere of service, discipline and morality. He led the Swadeshi and Boycott movements in his district (Barisal, now in E. Pakistan) with unparallelled success, as a result of which he was kept under detention at the Lucknow Central Jail for more than a year.

Apart from being a man of letters, it is as a great teacher and builder of men that Aswini Kumar Datta is still remembered and honoured in Bengal.